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NURSERY RHYMES AND TALES

NURSERY RHYMES AND TALES

THEIR ORIGIN AND HISTORY

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TO
MARGARET
WINGATE
AND
HELEN

PREFACE

THE subject dealt with in the following pages is one of very great interest. I may be allowed to think so, at least, for it has interested me for nearly twenty years.

The book is not bulky : I have always shared the conviction of Callimachus, μέγα βιβλίον μέγα κακόν. Nevertheless, it embodies the results of a great deal of very miscellaneous reading, and of some real research.

There are some conjectures in these pages, naturally, but in every case I have supplied sufficient evidence to enable the reader to judge for himself as to the validity of my theories.

Wherever a foreign rhyme is quoted, I have translated it in the kind of jingling verse that matches the original. I have done this because I hope that the book will appeal to the general reader (and perhaps to some clever children) as well as to those who are students of folk-lore.

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NURSERY RHYMES AND TALES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφος πῶς ἐστι.

—ARISTOTLE: *Metaphysics*, I, 2.

UNTIL comparatively recent times nobody dreamt of taking a serious interest in nursery rhymes and nursery tales. They were unconsidered trifles. The professed antiquary regarded them as undignified and unworthy of notice. It was only with the rise of the new science of folk-lore, which really dates from early in the last century, that these rhymes and stories began to attract attention. Then it appeared that they are to be found all over Europe, and that they have analogues among uncivilized peoples all over the world. It appeared also that many of them are of an incredible antiquity, bearing unmistakable traces of their origin in prehistoric times. It has been shrewdly suggested, in fact, that much of children's pleasure in nursery tales

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may "arise from an unconscious sympathy between the child and the thought and custom of the childhood of civilization."¹ It seems strange that such childish trifles should be amongst the most ancient things of the world. But it is difficult to exaggerate the extreme tenacity of tradition in little things. Nothing is more astonishing than the way that a phrase or a custom will last ages after the original significance of it has been forgotten. This is true of humanity in general, but it is especially true of children. They play games with exactly the same ritual and exactly the same phrases, in some instances, as the children of thousands of years ago. It has been pointed out² that a game played to-day by English schoolboys, where a boy "sets a back" against a wall, and a line of other lads leap upon it, one after the other, holding up so many fingers, and crying: "Buck, buck, how many horns do I hold up?"³ is the same game, with the same formula, as that described by Petronius Arbiter, the Roman poet of the days of Nero, in his *Satyricon* (c. 64): "Trimalchio, not to seem moved by the loss, kissed the boy and bade him get upon his back. Without delay the boy climbed on horseback on him, and slapped him on the shoulders with his hand, laughing and calling out, *Bucca, bucca, quot sunt hic?*" Here is a game, played by English lads in the twentieth century, which was played with the same cry, "*Bucca, buck,*" by schoolboys in the streets of Rome when the Apostle Paul was a prisoner there.

And children are as tenacious of their rhymes and stories as they are of their games. There is the same uncanny persistence of tradition, age after age. In the repetition of tales children demand the exact reproduction of the familiar phrases. Anyone who has any experience of little children knows that. You are suddenly and sharply called to account if you forget a detail or if you vary a phrase. "A friend of mine, repeating *Puss in Boots*, inadvertently made the hero sit on a chair instead of on a box to pull on his boots. She was greeted by a sharp volley of 'Noes!' The same lady tells me that when narrating the story of *Beauty and the Beast* for the second time only she forgot in describing the effect of the Beast's sighing to add after the words 'till the glasses on the table shake, and the candles are nearly blown out'; whereupon the severe little listener at once stopped the narrator and supplied the interesting detail."⁴ It is precisely the same with savages. The tales of the Eskimo, according to Rink, have to be "related as nearly as possible in the words of the original version, with only a few arbitrary reiterations. . . . Generally the smallest deviation from the original version will be taken notice of, and corrected."⁵ We owe the preservation of our nursery rhymes and nursery tales from remote ages to the astonishing persistence of popular tradition, reinforced by the characteristic conservatism of childhood.

Most of our familiar English nursery rhymes first

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appear in print in chap-books of the eighteenth century. Children's books scarcely existed before then, and in any case they belong to the most perishable sort of printed matter. So that for documentary proof of the early date of any of these rhymes we have to depend largely upon casual references in our early literature, especially in the Elizabethan drama. There are several references of this kind, though some of those which have been quoted in the past are not apposite.

For instance, it has been said that the nursery rhyme of *Jack and Jill* is mentioned several times in Shakespeare, as where Puck says, in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (III, 2, 461): "Jack shall have Jill; Nought shall go ill; The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well," and where Biron says, in *Love's Labour's Lost* (V, 2, 805): "Our wooing doth not end like an old play; Jack hath not Jill." But these passages do not refer to the nursery rhyme at all. "Jack" and "Jill" here are merely a familiar pair of names like the "'Arry" and "'Arriet" of modern Cockneydom. So in a traditional rhyme:

I won't be my father's Jack, I won't be my mother's Jill.
I will be the fiddler's wife, and have music when I will.⁶

So too in an Elizabethan ballad:

Some do call me Jacke, sweet heart,
And some do call me Jille;
But when I come to the kinge's faire courte,
They call me Wilfulle Wille.⁷

So also in a fifteenth-century primer of etiquette,
The Lytulle Childrenes Lytil Boke (circa 1480) :

And aryse up soft and styлле,
And iangylle nether with Jac ne Jille.

There is no allusion to the nursery rhyme in these passages, but happily we have other reasons for being assured of its extreme antiquity.

Similarly, it has been alleged that there is an allusion to *Handy-Spandy*, *Jack-a-Dandy*, in *King Lear* (IV, 6, 155), where the old King says : " See how yond Justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark in thine ear : change places, and, handy-dandy, which is the Justice, which is the thief ? " But the reference here is to the game called " Handy-Dandy," in which something was passed between the two hands, and a guess made as to which hand contained it—a game played with the formula :

Handy-dandy riddledy ro,
Which will you have, high or low ?

Florio's *Italian Dictionary* (1598) explains " Bazzichiare " as " to shake between two hands ; to play handy-dandy." The game has parallels in every age and country.⁸

In other cases our nursery rhymes are undoubtedly mentioned, as where in *King Lear* (I, 4, 191) the Fool sings :

Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

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There is also a plain allusion to this rhyme in the *Ballad of the Bad Black Sheep*, a poem which this reference itself would serve to date from the fifteenth century, when the growing wool trade between England and Flanders had made sheep-farming extremely profitable :

Halfe England ys nowght now but shepe,
In every corner they play boe-pepe.

Still earlier it is recorded that Alice Causton, in the year 1364, for giving short measure of ale, had to "play bo-pepe thorowe a pillory."⁹

It has been said that there is a reference to the nursery rhyme *Sing a Song of Sixpence* in *Twelfth Night* (II, 3, 32), where Sir Andrew calls upon the Clown for a song, and Sir Toby adds : "Come on, there is a sixpence for you ; let's have a song." It needs a strong imagination to detect any allusion to the rhyme here, especially as Sir Andrew adds : "There's a testril of me too." But there does seem to be a genuine reference to it in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca* (V, 2) where Junius says : "Let me sing then," and Petillius responds : "Whoa ! here's a stir now ! Sing a song of sixpence !"

Other rhymes, again, are found in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century song-books. Thus, for instance, *The King of France went up the Hill* is given in *Pigges Corantoe, or Newes from the North* (1642) as *Old Tarlton's Song*. Tarlton the actor was a contemporary of Shakespeare, and died in 1588,

the year of the Armada, so that our knowledge of the rhyme may be said to go back at least to the middle of the sixteenth century. And, to give a second instance, of a similar kind, "Old woman, old woman, whither so high? To sweep the cobwebs off the sky," was evidently familiar enough a century later, for *Musick's Handmaid*, a book of songs published in 1673, has an air called *Lilliburlero, or, Old Woman, Whither so High*. By means of casual allusions such as these, we can trace many of our most familiar children's rhymes back to the seventeenth century, and a few to the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁰ This is interesting, but it is a very trivial matter in comparison with the fact that, on other grounds, we know that the antiquity of some of them is to be measured in thousands of years, or rather that it is so great that it cannot be measured at all.

Such rhymes as these are not likely to have many exact parallels in other languages. Almost everything depends upon the jingle of the words, and that cannot often pass unchanged into another speech. Some few rhymes are indeed parallel in theme. Thus a rhyme from Saxony runs :

Hümpelken-Pümpelken sat op de Bank,
Hümpelken-Pümpelken fêl von de Bank,
Do is kên Dokter in Engelland
De Hümpelken-Pümpelken kuräre kann.¹¹

(Hümpelken-Pümpelken sat on a bench,
Hümpelken-Pümpelken fell from the bench,

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There does not in all England dwell
A doctor that can make him well.)

A French rhyme is :

Boule, boule su l'keyere
Boule, boule par terre
Y n'a nuz homme en Angleterre
Pou l'erfaire.¹²

(Ball, ball, on the wall,
Ball, ball, on the ground.
No man in England can be found
Who can mend the fallen ball.)

In Scandinavia one version of the rhyme is :

Lille bylle laae paa hylde,
lille bylle fald ned of hylde,
ingen mand in verden kon
hjaelpe lille bylle istond.¹³

(Lille Bulle from the shelf fell down,
Lille Bulle cracked his crown,
Though you search the country o'er
None can Lille Bulle restore.)

These rhymes are obviously parallels to our *Humpty-Dumpty Sat on a Wall*, for the *motif* is the same, the riddle of the broken egg.

There are other rhymes in different languages that are roughly alike because they originate in a similar routine of play. Wherever there has been a father sitting in his arm-chair nursing the baby there has naturally been the pretence of riding the little one on his knee :

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This is the way the ladies ride—

Nim, nam, nim.

This is the way the gentlemen ride—

Trot, trit, trot.

This is the way the hunters ride—

A-gallop, a-gallop, a-gallop !

In Germany this would be :

So reiten die Herren : Auf ihren stolzen Pferden :

Zuck, zuck, zuck, zuck, zuck, zuck.

So reiten die Bauern,

Die Bauern,

Die Humpels,

Die Pumpels :

Truf truf, truf truf, truf truf,

So reiten die Husaren,

Klabaster, klabaster, klabaster.¹⁴

(Thus ride the gentlemen

On their proud horses :

Zuck, zuck, zuck, zuck, zuck, zuck.

Thus ride the farmers,

The farmers,

The hobblers,

The wobblers,

Truf truf, truf truf, truf truf,

Thus ride the hussars :

Klabaster, klabaster, klabaster.)

Wherever a mother has been baking with the little one playing about the kitchen there has naturally been a play and a pretence suggested by it :

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man !

Bake me a cake as fast as you can ;

Prick it, and pat it, and mark it with a T,

And put it in the oven for Tommy and me.

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So in Germany :

Backe, backe, Kichelchen,
Zwei in einem Tigelchen,
Drei in einem Pfännchen,
Back, Mutter Aennchen.¹⁵

(Bake, bake a little cake,
Two in a little plate,
Three in a little pan,
Bake, little Mother Ann !)

Wherever anyone has played with a baby's chubby fingers, it has been natural to make up rhymes about them :

Thumbikin, Thumbikin, broke the barn,
Pinnikin, Pinnikin, stole the corn.
Long-backed Gray
Carried it away.
Old Mid-man sat and saw,
But Peesy-weesy paid for a'.

So in Germany :

Das ist der Daumen,
Der schüttelt Pflaumen,
Der liest sie,
Der isst sie,
Und der sagt : wart, ich wills der Mutter sagen.¹⁶

(This is the thumb,
This stole the plum,
This let it,
This ate it,
And this one said : Wait ! I'll tell Mother !)

And in France :

Celui-ci a vu le lièvre
Celui-ci l'a couru,
Celui-ci l'a tenu,
Celui-ci l'a mangé,
Celui-la n'a rien eu.
Il a dit à sa mère :
J'n'ai pas eu, j'n'ai pas eu !¹⁷

(This one saw a hare,
This ran after it,
This caught it,
This ate it,
This got none of it,
And he said to his mother,
I had none, I had none !)

So among the Ba-Congo negroes of Northern Angola "you hear the mother croon and sing about the baby's fingers. The thumb says, 'I'm the master of the lot,' the forefinger says, 'I'm the sign of danger,' the middle finger says, 'I'm the tallest of the crew,' the third finger says, 'I'm not far behind: a bit more and I shall catch you,' the little finger says, 'Ah, but I'm the hope of the town, for a town without a little one is no town at all!'"¹⁸ With the exception of such examples as these, however, it may be said that generally each language has its own doggerel, which presents only rough parallels to that of other lands.

But with nursery tales the situation is different. A prose tale may pass without difficulty from one speech to another across a continent.¹⁹ And the

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extreme antiquity of many of our nursery tales is placed beyond doubt because they are found, in a thousand variations, all over the world, in civilized and uncivilized countries, and because they embody numerous traces of savage customs and savage ideas. Obviously, they date from prehistoric times, and have spread over the world with the migrations of races and the forgotten commerce of many thousands of years.

Some of the characteristic incidents of our nursery tales are to be found in very ancient literature. The Egyptian tale of *The Two Brothers*,²⁰ for example, which was written down in the reign of Rameses II, has at least three incidents which can be paralleled in folk and fairy tales all over the world—a lock of golden hair is borne by the Nile to the king's palace, whereupon he insists on finding and marrying the woman to whom it belongs; the hero hides his life in a flower; and when at last he is slain, in the form of a bull, two of his blood-drops become persea trees, which reveal and avenge the murder. Now the first incident (with a glass slipper instead of a golden tress) is part of the plot of *Cinderella*. (There is a closer parallel still in the Greek tale of Rhodopis, whose sandal was borne away by an eagle, while she was bathing, and dropped near Psammetichus, the King of Egypt, which led to the king seeking and marrying the owner.)²¹ The next incident embodies the notion of the "separable soul," which is found in *The Giant with no Heart in his Body*, and hosts of other

folk tales in many lands. The last incident—the talking tree sprung from the blood or bones of the dead—is found in the tale of *The Juniper Tree*, in some versions of *Cinderella*, and in many other folk stories.

The story of Polyphemus, again, is a folk tale which has become embedded in the *Odyssey*. There are several parallels, which cannot possibly be borrowed from Homer. To give one example only, in the Russian tale of *One-Eyed Likho*,²² the blacksmith puts out the one eye of the witch, and then escapes among the sheep, exactly as Ulysses did.

Then many of the typical incidents of our nursery tales are used in mediaeval and renaissance collections of *gesta* and *novelle*, and one or two of the tales themselves also appear. *Puss in Boots*, for example, is told by Straparola and Basile.²³ But the first appearance of a number of these tales in their entirety, and in a literary form, is in Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé*, which was published in 1697. These eight stories number amongst them the nursery tales which we know as *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Red Riding Hood*, *Blue Beard*, *Cinderella*, *Puss in Boots*, and *Hop o' My Thumb*.

Perrault's relation to those tales raises a number of difficult and interesting questions. Charles Perrault (1628–1703) was a man of letters who was a good deal about the Court of Louis XIV.²⁴ He was an academician, and it was the reading of his poem, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, to the Academy

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that angered Boileau, and provoked the once famous controversy about the relative merits of the ancients and the moderns. But Perrault's fame (as he would be astonished to find if he revisited the banks of the Seine) depends entirely on his tales. There is an admirable monument to his memory in the gardens of the Louvre. The bust of Perrault stands upon a pedestal, which is surrounded by a ring of dancing children; but one of the dancers is *Puss in Boots*, on his hind legs, giving a paw to the child on either side.

Almost certainly the tales were written down by Perrault's boy, who heard them from his nurse. Perrault himself merely corrected the language, and, in one or two instances, probably modified an incident in the stories.

Then, more than a century later, came the publication, from 1812 to 1822, of Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Jakob Ludwig Karl Grimm (1785-1863) and his brother, Wilhelm Karl Grimm (1786-1859), gathered this mass of household tales from the lips of the peasantry throughout Germany. Their work might be described as the real beginning of the science of folk-lore. Ever since the study has been prosecuted with remarkable diligence and enthusiasm.

Incidentally, a great deal has come to light that bears upon our nursery rhymes and nursery tales. A very large number of interesting collections has been published, but, curiously enough, there are hardly any books devoted expressly to the origin

and history of nursery rhymes and nursery tales. Some of these stories and verses, however, are mentioned casually here and there in works dealing with larger subjects. One might devote a lifetime, indeed, to the mass of books treating of folk-lore in general, mythology, prehistoric man, ethnology, savage life, and so forth, each of which may contribute a detail or two to our knowledge of the history of our children's rhymes and children's tales.

CHAPTER II

MYTH AND CUSTOM

SOME of our nursery rhymes and nursery tales are in their origin neither more nor less than myths of nature. They are the grotesque fancies by which primitive man sought to represent and explain the natural phenomena which surrounded him. It was inevitable that he should think about the panorama of nature, and that he should strive to imagine an explanation, however naïve it might be, of all that he saw.

Sekesa, an intelligent Kafir, said to Arbrousset, the African traveller, "For twelve years I have shepherded my flock. It was dark, and I sat down upon a rock, and asked myself such questions as these, sad questions, since I was unable to answer them—Who made the stars? What supports them? Do the waters never grow weary of flowing from morning to evening, from evening to morning, and where do they find rest? Whence come the clouds which pass and repass, and dissolve in rain? Who sends them? Our diviners certainly do not send rain, since they have no means of making it, nor do I see them with my eyes going up to heaven to seek it. I cannot see the wind, and know not what

it is. Who guides and causes it to blow, to rage, and overwhelm us? Nor do I know how the corn grows. Yesterday there was not a blade of grass in my field, and to-day it is green. Who gave to the earth the wisdom and power to bring forth?"²⁵

This, of course, represents an unusual level of thought for a savage mind. It is a speculative and sceptical mood rather uncommon in an uncivilized race. But it is easy to see that, at an earlier stage of development, the inquiring spirit (which is here mournfully aware of its helplessness) would have simply invented grotesque explanations of all that was puzzling.

For there is a real parallel, though it is often emphasized excessively, between the childhood of the individual and the childhood of the race. The child will invent strange stories to account for the strange events which come to pass in its experience. A high wind was explained by a child five years old by the supposition that it was God's birthday, and He had received a trumpet as a present! Similarly, another child supposed, when it thundered, that God was having coals put in!²⁶ In an exactly similar way early man fancied absurd explanations of what was beyond his understanding. The sun rose and the darkness disappeared. The sun was a hero who climbed up into the sky and routed the monster of darkness. The sun set and darkness returned. The monster had conquered the hero and swallowed him. We must remember, if this seems impossibly grotesque, that the Chinese, who

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are by no means a barbarous people, still believe that an eclipse is caused by a dragon devouring the luminary, and that they beat drums and set off fireworks to frighten the monster away.²⁷ Similar conceptions are found all over the world.²⁸ The Chiquitos of South America say that in an eclipse the moon is hunted across the sky by huge dogs, which tear her until her light is reddened and quenched by blood flowing from her wounds, and they raise a fearful din and shoot arrows into the sky to drive the dogs off.²⁹ Similarly the Welsh and the Irish, as late as the seventeenth century, ran about beating kettles and pans during an eclipse.³⁰ Examples of the same custom might be cited from almost every age and country. Here are the last instances that I have chanced upon in my reading. St. Eloy, who was Bishop of Noyon in the seventh century, says in a sermon : " If at any time the moon is darkened, let no one presume to make a clamour, for at certain times it is darkened by the command of God."³¹ Boëthius tells us that when there is an eclipse of the moon :

A public error straight through vulgar minds doth pass,
And they with many strokes beat upon brass.³²

Sir George Adam Smith saw the custom in Palestine, and was given the traditional explanation of it. " In May, 1891, I witnessed at Hasbeya, on the western skirts of Hermon, an eclipse of the moon. When the shadow began to creep across her disc, there rose from the village a hideous din of drums,

metal pots, and planks of wood beaten together ; guns were fired, and there was much shouting. I was told that this was done to terrify the great fish which was swallowing the moon, and to make him disgorge her.”³³

When man was first found upon the earth, unnumbered ages before history began, he had scarcely a child’s mind, and all he saw around him was as strange and wonderful as it is to a little child to-day. The sun rose and set, the moon waxed and waned, the tides ebbed and flowed, and he did not know why, and he wondered. And presently, with a child’s insatiable curiosity, and a child’s undisciplined imagination, he made up strange stories to account for these strange things.

There can be no doubt that the reduction of almost everything in the early culture of mankind to sun-myths, so fashionable a generation ago, was carried to the very limit of absurdity. It seems to be the fate of every theory in folk-lore to be made ridiculous by being pressed too far. But it is beyond question, on the other hand, that there *are* myths of light and darkness, of sunset and sunrise, embedded in the early traditions of mankind.

Nor must it be thought that this is wholly a modern doctrine—the clever conjecture of students of folk-lore. It is probable that the original significance was remembered, in some cases, from the earliest days, as an esoteric tradition among priests and wizards. The Sūtras were annotated by the Brahman theologian and reformer Kumārila

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Bhaṭṭa, who is supposed to have lived about A.D. 700. Answering the objection that the gods were immoral, he explained several of the fables as sun-myths. Thus Prajâpati, the Lord of Creation, violated his own daughter. What does this signify? Prajâpati is one name for the sun, as the Lord of Light. His daughter Ushas is the dawn, and the fable means that when the sun rises it follows the dawn.³⁴

This, however, is exceptional. Almost always the mythical sense has been lost, until it was recovered by the comparative method of modern students, and, meanwhile, the tale has become merely a tale, told for the sake of its bizarre adventure.

Our nursery tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* is a myth of sunset and sunrise.³⁵ The little heroine's red cloak is the first piece of evidence. There are many parallels in the fancies of savage peoples all over the world. The Letts have a story which tells how the daughter of the sun hung her red cloak on an oak tree. At the other end of the world, the Australians of Encounter Bay say that the sun is a woman and has a lover among the dead who has given her a red kangaroo skin in which she appears at her rising.³⁶ It is probable that the red clay with which the Kafirs smear their bodies has reference to the worship of the Hottentot hero Heitsi-Eibib, "as a symbol of the red dawn, which was supposed to have been caused by the blood shed from the wound in the knee of Heitsi-Eibib,

which he received when overcoming the God of Darkness."³⁷ The wolf is a very natural personification of night. The French phrase for twilight, *entre chien et loup*, is sufficient to explain why. The dog is the domesticated animal that goes about with his master in the light of day, but the wolf is the wild beast that hides until nightfall, and then haunts the darkness. Thus, in the Norse mythology it is ordained that in the twilight of the gods, the wolf Fenrir will devour the sun.³⁸ The Norsemen believed that another mythical wolf, Mânagarmr, sometimes swallowed the moon, and stained the heavens with blood.³⁹ Our English version of *Little Red Riding Hood* obscures the significance of the story, because it omits the grotesque climax, probably under the influence of Perrault's sophisticated version, *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*. But the German version of the story, *Rothkäppchen*, ends with the arrival of the hunter, who rips up the sleeping wolf, when the little damsel in her red cap comes out again safe and sound. It is the picturesque story of the adventure of the red sun devoured by the monstrous darkness at sunset, and then disgorged again at sunrise. The central incident is familiar in folk tales all over the world, as the Greek story of Kronos and the Hebrew story of Jonah would themselves be sufficient to remind us. There is an exact parallel to *Red Riding Hood*, in its first significance, in a Melanesian myth where the hero Qat, with a piece of red obsidian for a knife (representing the first red rays of the

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morning sun), cuts the Dawn out of the belly of Night.⁴⁰

The rhyme of *Jack and Jill* is a myth of the tides.⁴¹ And it happens that in this case we can trace the literary descent of the myth, so that it is not a matter of conjecture at all. In the *Younger Edda* (I, 11) we find the story of Hjuki and Bil. Mani is a man who has been placed in the sky to guide the moon in its course, and to regulate its waxing and waning aspects. One day Mani carried off from the earth two children, Bil and Hjuki, as they were returning from the spring called Byrgir, carrying between them the bucket called Saegr on the pole Simul, which they bore on their shoulders. "Vidfinn was the father of these children, who always follow Mani," says the *Edda*, "as we may easily see even from the earth."⁴² To this day the Swedish peasantry explain the markings on the moon's surface not as "rivers and mountains on her spotty globe," nor as a man with a thornbush and a lantern, but as a boy and a girl bearing a pail of water between them.⁴³ The very names show the significance of the legend. Hjuki is derived from a root meaning *to increase*, Bil from one meaning *to dissolve*, and they represent the waxing and waning phases of the moon. The water they bear marks the relation of the tides to the moon—a relation that must have been noticed from very early times. There is a singular parallel to the whole myth in a legend of the Haidas, an Indian tribe of North America. They say that

Koong, the moon, once drew up with his beams a man with a bucket in one hand and a bush which he had tried to hold on by in the other. When the man upsets the bucket it rains.⁴⁴

The tale of *Jack and the Beanstalk* has few parallels in the folk tales of Europe,⁴⁵ but there are analogues in many savage lands, particularly in Polynesia. The tale embodies a naïve conception of the savage mind. The tall trees of the forest are thought of as actually touching the solid sky. Jack is able to climb up the wonderful beanstalk into this empyrean country. The rest of the tale merges into the typical myth—when he cuts down the beanstalk, the giant falls headlong into the well and is drowned. This is merely the usual triumph of the light-hero over the night-monster. But the thought of a ladder from earth to heaven consisting of a tree which the hero climbs, though unique in the folk tales of England, is found in many other places. The Maori myth tells of Rangi and Papa, heaven and earth, lying closely pressed upon each other, to the discomfort of their children, until Tane-matua, *the god of the woods*, separated them, thrusting his head and feet against his mother, and raising his father on his back.⁴⁶ Obviously this means that it is the forest trees that prop the skies and hold them apart from the earth. The Maoris also have a story which tells how Tawhaki climbed up a creeper into heaven, where his footsteps as he walks about make the thunder. The Kasia of Bengal declare that the stars were once men who adventurously

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climbed up a great tree, whereupon others remaining below cut through the trunk and left them up in the branches.⁴⁷

The Malays have a tale about Kasimbaha who climbed up the rattans, from which a kindly rat had gnawed the thorns, until he came to heaven, where he now dwells among the gods. An aboriginal tribe in Paraguay believed that at death their souls would go up to heaven by the tree Llagdigua, which joins earth and sky. A Wyandot tale, recorded in the seventeenth century by a Jesuit missionary, tells how the dwarf hero Chakabech, wishing to go up to heaven, climbed a tree, and then blew upon it, whereupon it grew and grew, till it reached the sky. Chakabech explored this Elysian land, and then returned to earth to fetch his sister. He brought her up, and when she was safely in heaven, he broke off the tree low down, so that the route has since been impracticable.⁴⁸ A tribe in the Central Celebes relate that long ago the earth and the sky were connected by a creeper. A heavenly visitant appeared on earth and married a maiden, by whom he had a child. One day the child misbehaved, and the father began to climb the creeper, back to heaven. His wife tried to follow him, whereupon he cut through the creeper, and they both fell to earth and were turned to stone.⁴⁹

Some of our nursery rhymes and nursery tales, then, may be said to represent the fantastic thoughts of early man when his imagination was at work upon the facts of nature. Other rhymes and tales

again, preserve traces of the habits and customs of prehistoric man, many of which are exactly paralleled in savage tribes to-day. It is not too much to say that we may see "the life of primitive man cropping out in almost every sentence of the nursery tale."⁵⁰

There is nothing more widely characteristic of savage humanity, for example, than what is called "tabu." Some things are forbidden to be seen or used or done by some persons, and are hedged around with a peculiar secrecy and sanctity. Many of these tabus are related to sex. In New Guinea the women must not see a new canoe until it has been launched. Among the Todas in India the women may not walk on the path which the sacred buffaloes traverse on the way to and from the village. There was an altar of Hercules in Rome which women might not approach.⁵¹ Among the aborigines of Australia no woman may witness the sacred mysteries of the men, or see the "bull roarer" which summons the men to those ceremonies, on pain of death.⁵² Other tabus are connected with food. Thus the Kirghiz must not eat swine's flesh, because the tribe is descended from a pig—one of the many instances where a tabu is explained by a totem. Similarly, the Imushagh abstain from eating birds, fish, and lizards, on the score that these animals are "their mothers' brothers."⁵³ Other tabus gather around kingship. Some African kings may not see the sea. The chiefs in Tahiti may not set foot upon the ground. Other tabus, again, are connected with

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religion and priesthood. Thus the Flamen Dialis in ancient Rome might not see an army under arms, nor have a knot in any part of his garments, nor touch a horse, a goat, a dog, raw flesh, beans, or ivy, with many other restrictions.⁵⁴ The Pythagoreans were essentially a religious confraternity, and some extremely interesting tabus survived amongst them,⁵⁵ as, for example, not to stir the fire with iron, not to let the swallows share your roof, not to leave the mark of the pot in the ashes or the mark of the body in the bed.⁵⁶ (It is easy to see, by the way, that the last is a survival of savage precautions against pursuit by an enemy: it was wise to obliterate all signs that would show where you had cooked your food, and where you had encamped for the night, when every man of another tribe was a possible foe.)⁵⁷

The forbidden sight in the tales of *Psyche*, of *Melusina*, of *Lady Godiva*, and of *Beauty and the Beast*, the forbidden question in the tale of *Lohengrin* and the forbidden room in the tale of *Bluebeard* (which have hosts of parallels in folk tales all over the world) are relics of the savage notion of tabu.

Closely akin to this is the peculiar power which attaches to names in the savage mind. To know anyone's name is to have a sort of supernatural power over him, for the name is a part of his personality. In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, perhaps the oldest piece of literature extant in the world, the dead man, on his advent into the world of shades, has to say to the gods, "I, even I, know

you, and I know your names ! ”⁵⁸ Knowing the names of these Rhadamanthine deities, the dead man has magical power over them, and is safe. Origen accounts for the miracles of pagan magicians by supposing they have learned the true names of some demons, and thus have authority over them.⁵⁹ It is this belief in the power of the name that explains the reluctance of many savages that their real names should be known, and the use of secondary names and nicknames in many uncivilized tribes. Herodotus tells us that the women of Miletus would never call their husbands by their names, doubtless for some such reason.⁶⁰ So to-day among the Amazulu the woman must not call her husband by name ; she will call him “ the father of So-and-So,” one of their children. Congo natives stricken with sleeping sickness will change their names, so as to lose their identity, and thus escape the evil spirits that have sent the disease. Every Hausa child has a secret name, known only to himself, as well as a public name which is used.⁶¹ The Tasmanians show great dislike to their names being mentioned. Among the Tshi-speaking tribes of West Africa a man’s real name is always concealed from all but his nearest relatives, and he is known to other persons by a nickname.⁶² The Indians of British Guinea are extremely reluctant to use their names, and they address one another according to the relationship which exists between them. In the Scottish Highlands, up to a recent date, “ if the children of a family were dying in infancy, one after

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the other, it was thought that by changing the name the evil would be counteracted. The new name was called a 'road name' (*ainn rathaid*), being that of the first person encountered on the road when going with the child to be baptized."⁶³ In the Central Celebes, when a child is very sickly, a new name is bestowed on it for the purpose of inducing the spirits, who cause the sickness, to suppose that the child is not the same, but another.⁶⁴ The peasants who live in the Aran Islands in Galway Bay refuse to-day to tell their names to a visitor.⁶⁵ Among the Scottish Highlanders, within living memory, people calling on business at a house where a servant was kept had "a very strong dislike to tell their names to the servant who admitted them."⁶⁶ Relics of this reluctance to use the name abound in every language, and among every people—as when the Hebrew read Yahveh and said Adonai, when the Greek thought of the Furies, and spoke of the Eumenides, when the Laplander refers to the bear as "the old man in the fur coat," and when the Englishman says, "Talk of the devil and you will see his horns."

It is a relic of this notion as to the power of the name that is the *motif* of a whole cycle of stories of which the best known are the German tale of *Rumpelstilzchen*,⁶⁷ and the English tale of *Tom-Tit-Tot*.⁶⁸ The demon is discomfited by the accidental discovery of his name. "Nimmy-nimmy-not," said the girl at the last moment, "your name's Tom-Tit-Tot." Whereupon the malicious sprite

shrieked awfully, and vanished, and she never saw him again.⁶⁹

All over the world, in savage countries, we find what is called "totemism." A totem is usually an animal which is regarded as the patron or the deity, and very often also as the ancestor or the relative of an individual or a tribe.⁷⁰ It is probable that all peoples have passed through the totem stage. In the beginning it was perhaps merely a general practice of naming persons after plants and animals. Thus among the Papuans the totems are still merely family names: a clan is named after the Crocodile, the Snake, the Shark, and so forth—and the totems have not reached the rank of demons or deities.⁷¹ But generally the totem animals are revered, and their help is sought. Thus among the Arunta they are held sacred, and it is believed that they help men of the particular clan which bears their name—the Little Hawk, the Witchetty Grub, the Lizard, and so on.⁷²

Many things might serve to fix the particular totem, either of a person or of a clan. A Red Indian might be called "White Bull" because during the long fast which, along with many solemn ceremonies, initiated him into adult life, he had dreamt of a white bull, and therefore went under the protection of that animal for the rest of his life. Or a tribe might be called the "Black Eagles," because, living in a region where that bird abounded, they believed themselves to be originally descended from it. Thus the Indians of Charlotte Island

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never eat crows, because they believe that their ancestors were crows, and they smear themselves with black paint in memory of their lineage.⁷³

All savages are evolutionists of a sort; they believe that men and animals are akin, and that men were once animals, or animals once men. Consequently, men may still occasionally change into beasts, or beasts into men, especially through sorcery. Many things would aid this belief. There would be inevitable confusion between the totem name of a man and the real name of the animal which happened to be the totem. Thus, among the Algonquin Indians, who are divided into clans called after the Bear, Wolf, Deer, Tortoise, Rabbit, and so on, a man might casually remark that "he had been talking to a Bear," when he merely meant that he had been talking to a man of the Bear clan, or it might become a piece of savage scandal that someone "had married a Wolf," which simply related the fact that a man had wedded into the Wolf tribe. But it may be readily seen how this would lend itself to stories of strange intercourse and friendship between men and beasts. Undoubtedly relics of totemistic belief and language underlie all our stories about friendly animals,⁷⁴ such as *Puss in Boots*, and *Whittington and his Cat*, and about handsome princes transformed by witchcraft into animals, such as *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Frog Prince*.

Cannibalism is another characteristic of the savage that has left its traces in our children's

tales. The giant or the ogre or the witch has often a nefarious design of making a meal out of the hero. This is simply the remembrance of a time when primitive men were cannibals and ate their enemies, as some savages do to this day. It is curious, too, that the monster in the tales nearly always uses a formula like that of the giant in *Jack the Giant Killer* :

Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman !
Be he alive or be he dead
I'll grind his bones to make me bread !⁷⁵

So the ogre in *Le Petit Poucet* says : " Je sens le chair fraîche ! " ⁷⁶ and in *The Devil with Three Golden Hairs* the devil exclaims : " Ich rieche, rieche Menschenfleisch ! " ⁷⁷ In the Norse tale of *Short-shanks*, " Huf ! " says the ogre. " What a horrid smell of Christian man's blood ! " ⁷⁸ In the Indian tale of *Princess Pepperina*, the jinn begins to sniff about and cry : " I smell the blood of a man ! " ⁷⁹ In the Gaelic tale of *Cathal O'Cruachan* the giant, when he came from the Hunting Hill and went into the house, said " E ! Ho ! Hoagich ! I feel the smell of a traitor here to-night ! " ⁸⁰ Now the witch doctors in Africa are always said " to smell out " a victim, and it is well known that savages possess an extraordinarily keen sense of smell which civilized man has lost. It would be quite possible for a primitive cannibal, as it is still for some animals, to smell a hidden man. ⁸¹ The giant in

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Jack the Giant Killer, the ogre in *Hop o' My Thumb*, the witch in *Hansel and Grethel*, and many other personages in folk tales are all represented as cannibals, and most of them *smell* the hidden hero.⁸²

Some children's rhymes recall another ghastly fact in the early history of mankind—the practice of human sacrifice. It is found among many savage peoples to-day, and it lasted into historic times in Europe, in isolated instances. Most of the traces which it has left in popular tradition are concerned with the sacrifice of a victim as a propitiation to the spirits of the earth or the water at the foundation of a dwelling or a bridge. Human victims were buried beneath the gates of Mandalay. In Polynesia, the central pillar of an island temple was often planted upon the body of a man.⁸³ Eighty years ago, in Fiji, an English sailor actually saw men buried alive in the holes in which the posts of the chief's house were being set up.⁸⁴ The Sule Pagoda at Rangoon is said to have had a captive fastened to a stake and buried alive at each corner. The practice is found also in Borneo, and indeed in many savage lands. Hiel the Bethelite laid the foundation of Jericho "with the loss of [literally, *in*] Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof with the loss of [*in*] his youngest son Segub."⁸⁵ Many legends in southern Europe are concerned with the custom. Thus in Serbia the fortress of Scutari was built by three brothers, but every night a demon razed all that three hundred masons had built during the day. The evil spirit

had to be appeased by human sacrifice, so the wife of the youngest brother, bringing food for the workmen, was built into the wall. At her entreaty a hole was left that she might suckle her baby for a time, and the visitor is still shown a stream of water, which looks milky because of the lime in it, trickling down the wall of the fortress.⁸⁶ In some parts of Russia the practice has reduced itself to the sacrifice of an animal, and in other provinces to the mere naming of one, at the commencement of work upon the building, but there are still plain traces of the original custom. In the province of Archangel some animal is killed and buried on the spot where the first log or the first stone is to be laid.⁸⁷ In other parts of Russia the carpenters who are going to build the house call out, at the first few strokes of the axe, the name of some bird or beast, believing that the creature thus named will rapidly die. It is significant to read that "on such occasions the peasants take care to be very civil to the carpenters, being assured that *their own names might be pronounced* by those workmen if they were neglected or provoked."⁸⁸ There are several folk songs current amongst the peasantry in Greece which relate the burial alive of a woman as a sacrifice at the building of a bridge. One, from the Peloponnesos, relates that when the bridge across the Tricha was being built it fell down each night, until a bird perched on an arch and sang a song which told the builders that the bridge could never be built until the wife of the master mason

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was buried in the foundations. Another, from Cappadocia, is quite similar. It relates that at the building of the bridge of Adana, Yiannaki's wife is buried in the excavation, and exclaims, with her last breath :

Three only sisters once were we, we were three sisters only,
The one did build the Danube's bridge, the second the
Euphrates ;
And I, I too, the murdered one, the bridge build of Adana.⁸⁹

Legend tells that St. Columba found it necessary to bury St. Oran alive beneath the foundation of his monastery, to propitiate the spirits of the soil who destroyed each night what had been built during the day.⁹⁰ The custom survived in the Fens of Lincolnshire as late as the sixteenth century, but the notion of sacrifice had become changed into that of a dread and appropriate penalty. "Such as hauing wals and banks neere vnto the sea, and doo suffer the same to decaie (after conuenient admonition) whereby the water entereth and drowneth vp the countrie, are by a certaine custom apprehended, condemned, and staken in the breach, where they remaine for euer as parcell of the foundation of the new wall that is made vpon them, as I have heard reported."⁹¹ The popular memory retained a trace of the custom until within the recollection of those who are still living. When a new bridge was built at Halle, as late as 1843, there was a suspicion abroad among the people that a child was wanted to be built into the foundation.⁹²

It is with regard to the building of bridges that the custom has left most traces in European legend. That one can very well understand. It was so much more difficult to build a bridge than a house, and when raging floods carried away the mason's work it might well seem that the spirit of the waters was angry. It is easy to see, in many legends of this kind, the civilizing progress by which an animal⁹³ is first substituted for a man, and then is regarded, not as deliberately offered in sacrifice, but as thrown to the Devil to cheat him of higher prey. Thus the gilt cock which many travellers have noticed upon the Sachsenhausen Bridge at Frankfort commemorates the fact that the bridge was finished, after great difficulties had been encountered in building it, by the aid of the Devil, who bargained that he should have the first living thing that went across. A cock was driven across and the Devil was cheated. Similar stories are told about the Devil's Bridge over the Reuss in the St. Gothard's Pass, where a loaf of bread was thrown across, and a dog ran after it ; and about the Devil's Bridge near Aberystwyth, where precisely the same stratagem was used ; and about Kilgrim Bridge in North Yorkshire, which is supposed to derive its name from Grim, the shepherd's dog who ran across after the crust of bread.

Now, the game *London Bridge is Broken Down*, and the rhyme which accompanies it, preserve unmistakable traces of human sacrifice at the building of a bridge. There are many variants,

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but they nearly all agree in these suggestive particulars—the bridge has fallen down, and attempts to build it up with different materials are all failures, whereupon there follows—with an apparent lack of connexion—the arrest of a prisoner. In Germany, for example, the game *Die Magdeburger Brücke* begins : “ I want to go over the Magdeburg Bridge ! ” Then it proceeds : “ It is broken down. . . . Who has broken it ? . . . The goldsmith and his little daughter. . . . Let them build it up again. . . . But with what ? . . . With chains and with posts. . . . ” Then the game finishes : “ All creep through, all creep through, *We'll seize the last !* ” (*Kriecht Alle durch, kriecht Alle durch, Den letzten wollen wir fangen !*)⁹⁴ In France, in Germany, and in Ireland versions of the game have been recorded which introduce the Devil. The essential part of the English rhyme is :

London Bridge has fallen down, fallen down, fallen
down,

London Bridge has fallen down, My fair Lady !
How shall we build it up again, up again, up
again,

How shall we build it up again ? My fair Lady !

Build it up with lime and stone . . .

Stone and lime would wash away . . .

Build it up with iron bars . . .

Iron bars would bend and break . . .

Get a watch to watch all night . . .

Suppose the watch should fall asleep ? . . .

Get a dog to bark all night . . .

Suppose the dog should get a bone ? . . .

Get a cock to crow all night . . .

Suppose the cock should fly away ? . . .

What has this poor prisoner done ? . . .

Off to prison she must go.

My fair Lady ! ⁹⁵

The accompanying game is concerned throughout with the capture of a victim, and both the action and the rhyme are eloquent of the dark rite of which they are the relic.

One of the greatest landmarks in the history of mankind is the discovery and the use of metals. For numberless ages men made their weapons and their tools of stone. Some tribes are still living in the earliest Stone Age. Thus the Pygmies of New Guinea use flakes and splinters of stone but they have not got as far as to chip stone into implements comparable with those of the Palæolithic Age in Europe.⁹⁶ Our museums are crowded with specimens of stone knives, stone axes, arrowheads and spearheads of flint, ranging from the rudest piece of shaped stone to flints chipped and polished so beautifully that they might almost challenge comparison with the skilled metal work of later ages. Bronze superseded stone, a fact that was known to the Roman poet :

*Arma antiqua manus ungues dentesque fuerunt,
Et lapides, et item silvarum fragmina rami.*

.

*Posterius ferri vis est aerisque reperta,
Et prior aeris erat quam ferri cognitus usus.⁹⁷*

In the first four Books of Moses bronze (or copper,

for the Hebrew word may mean either) is mentioned eighty-three times, and iron only four times. The alloy we call bronze is composed, in varying proportions, of copper and tin, two metals which are easily found and easily worked. Copper is abundant in Cyprus: the island, indeed, owes its name to the metal. It is probable that the use of copper and then of bronze originated there⁹⁸ and spread thence to the Mediterranean lands and the Continent generally. It must have spread rapidly, for almost everywhere at roughly the same period we find an age of bronze succeeding an age of stone. Then, much later, came the great discovery of iron, which may be said, without exaggeration, to be the very foundation of all the later progress of humanity.

Now we find distinct traces of these three stages—the use of stone, of bronze, and of iron—in popular custom and popular superstition. Stone knives were retained in various sacred and special uses long after the use of metal had become universal. Thus circumcision among the Jews had to be performed with a stone knife.⁹⁹ And among the ancient Egyptians the incision made by the embalmers in a corpse must be made with a sharp knife of Ethiopian stone.¹⁰⁰ The Romans preserved a sacred flint in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, with which a hog was slain in sacrifice when a treaty was made.¹⁰¹ So to-day in New Guinea, at the festival of the sacred mango, the tree must be cut down with a stone adze, though iron tools are

common enough in the district.¹⁰² And so in Scotland a stone hammer was used in making the "clavie," a sort of fire-wheel prepared for some of the rites at Yule.¹⁰³

Similarly, the use of bronze survived in solemn customs. Among the Romans one of the many restrictions which surrounded the Flamen Dialis¹⁰⁴ (and which must have made his life a burden to him) was that his hair could only be cut by a free man with a bronze knife. And the Druids in Britain cut down the sacred mistletoe with a bronze axe.¹⁰⁵

But it is the discovery of iron that has left the deepest traces in popular usage and belief. The first appearance of iron in warfare must have been so strange an experience, especially for those who were armed with stones, and found themselves contending against these new weapons, so bright, so strong, so sharp, that it may well have seemed supernatural. Iron then acquired a magical character which it has never lost.

Every horseshoe nailed to a stable door witnesses to this. Fairies, witches, and all the dim world of sprites are thought of as belonging to the early age of stone. Are not arrowheads of stone, made by a forgotten race of men, and found in the soil, evidently "elfdarts," the weapons of the fairies?¹⁰⁶ Are not the fossil belemnites really "thunderbolts," supernatural weapons of stone? Many a backward tribe, using stone weapons, sheltering in caves, driven into the forests and the hills by a more

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advanced race armed with iron, would come to be regarded as pixies, gnomes, elves; and on their part they would dread these strange weapons of flashing metal and fly from them. So that iron has become a specific against all these dim creatures. The very name of iron is a charm against the Oriental jinn.¹⁰⁷ Some Indian heroes and saints lived in iron houses as a protection against demons.¹⁰⁸ The Lingāyats, when setting up the door of a new house, drive an iron nail into the frame to keep out evil spirits.¹⁰⁹ In Denmark a piece of iron is placed in the cradle to safeguard the baby against evil. So in Scotland after the birth of a baby iron nails were driven into the woodwork of the bed, or else a smoothing iron or a reaping-hook was placed under the bed, to keep off the fairies.¹¹⁰ "The Tramontains to this day put bread, the Bible, or a piece of iron in women's beds when travailing, to save the children from being thus stolen, and they commonly report that all uncouth, unknown wights are terrified by nothing earthly so much as by cold iron."¹¹¹ In Bulgaria a reaping-hook was placed in a corner of the room, to safeguard the newly born child against malicious sprites.¹¹² In the Cyclades it is the custom to call a child before baptism *Iron*, or *Dragon*, or some such name, to frighten away the evil spirits.¹¹³ Iron will guard you, in Finland, against the nightmare demon, and in Norway against the water spirits, while in Wales if you meet the fairies you have only to draw your knife to be safe.¹¹⁴ In

some parts of Scotland, where it is unlucky to mention swine, you can secure yourself against evil consequences, when anyone has spoken of a pig, by muttering "Cauld iron!"¹¹⁵ And in some districts in Germany it used to be believed that to stand upon a chain, a harrow, or a key that has been inherited renders witchcraft powerless. This has been quoted as if the charm-cancelling power resided in these things as heirlooms.¹¹⁶ It is more likely that it depends upon the circumstance that they are *all of iron*, and the detail about inheritance probably dates from a time when *anything made of iron* was a precious possession, to be handed down to one's descendants.

Now the game of *Tag*, which has developed many forms, was originally a game in which the pursued party was chased by a witch or a fairy, and saved himself from capture *by touching iron*. This form of the game was once universal in the United States¹¹⁷—where so many of the games of England have been preserved in their older forms—and it is still the common type of the sport in Germany and in Italy. The accompanying rhyme in Germany is :

Dreimal eiserne Stangen,
Wer nicht läuft wird gefangen,
Dreimal eiserne Schnitz,
Wer nicht läuft wird gesitzt,
Dreimal über den Rhein,
Wer nicht läuft ist mein.¹¹⁸

(One, two, three, an *iron* post,
Unless you run away, you're lost.

One, two, three, an *iron* bar,
Unless you run both fast and far—
One, two, three, across the Rhine,
You're a prisoner of mine !)

Then every one must have noticed the very prominent part played in many nursery tales by the youngest of the family. This is an unmistakable trace of the early custom by which not the eldest but the youngest son inherited the family possessions. Primogeniture is characteristic of a settled state of society. The eldest son inherits the baron's castle or the merchant's fortune, as a matter of course. But in very early times, and amid unsettled conditions, the elder sons went out to seek their fortune. They were warriors and hunters, and they went from home on raids against hostile tribes, and on long trails after their prey. Often they would establish themselves in a new region, where the hunting was better, or, in a later stage of culture, where the soil was unclaimed and untilled. Meanwhile the youngest son was the "hearth child." He stayed at home with his mother, for he was only a boy, and later, when the father died, he inherited the household goods and whatever there might be as a patrimony. This custom is still in force among some tribes, such as the Badaga in India, and it is explained by the natives themselves as due to the fact that as the sons of a family grow up and marry they leave the house of the parents and build houses elsewhere.

It is the duty of the youngest son to dwell with his parents and support them as long as they live, and when they die he continues to live in the parental house, of which he becomes the owner.¹¹⁹ The custom obtains also among the Mrus, the Kolhs, the Tartars, and other savage peoples.¹²⁰ It has been in force, also, as their tales prove, among savage tribes almost all over the world, from the Zulus to the Hawaiians. There are very distinct traces of it, too, in the laws and customs of most civilized peoples. As "Juveignerie" in France, as "Jüngstenrecht" in Germany, as "Borough English" in England, the custom is familiar to European lawyers. The usage was probably once universal. It is to be remembered that there was a traditional connexion between the youngest child and the hearth. The hearth was the heart of the homestead and a sort of household altar, and as the youngest inherited the homestead and was charged with the performance of religious rites he was the "hearth child." The law of the manor in certain parts of Kent allots to the youngest son or the youngest daughter "the hearth place in the homestead and as far as forty feet around it."¹²¹ Now this custom of inheritance by the latest born of the family has left plain traces in our children's tales wherever it is either the youngest child who comes to fortune, as in *The Golden Bird*, *The Red Bull of Norrøway*, and *Hop o' My Thumb*, or one connected, by way of ashes or cinders, with the hearth, as in *Cinderella* and all its analogues—*Aschenpüttel* in

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Germany (from *asche*, "ashes"), *Pepelluga* in Serbia (from *pepel*, "cinders"), *Kopciuszek* in Poland (from *kopec*, "soot"), *Askesis* in Sweden (from *asken*, "ashes"), and so on.

CHAPTER III

NUMBER AND MEMORY

THERE are many nursery rhymes in every language that are based upon numbers. Either they begin with a string of numerals, or they fit a rhyme to a number all the way through. There are several examples in English of each kind. Then there are also, in many languages, "counting-out rhymes," as they are called, absurd jingles which are used as a formula at the beginning of a game to decide who shall play on a particular side or who shall take a particular part. Most of these are based upon a structure of numerals. And the peculiar interest of many of these rhymes lies in the fact that they retain obvious traces of the stages by which prehistoric man first learned to count.

With a people who have a millennium of civilization behind them the sense of number has become almost an instinct. But we must not forget that number was once a great discovery. Many savage tribes have scarcely any sense of number. The numerals of thirty Australian languages have been carefully tabulated, and in no instance do they go beyond four.¹²² The Guaranis of Paraguay had the most copious language of all the tribes in that

country, but they could only count up to four.¹²³ The Bushmen could not count beyond two. The Botocudos had a word for "one," but everything beyond was "many." The Dammaras used no term beyond three.¹²⁴ The Andamanese islanders have names only for one and two, although able to count on the fingers up to ten, and otherwise exhibiting a considerable degree of intelligence.¹²⁵ The Tapiro Pygmies apparently have numbers up to ten, but "the plainsmen from the foothills to the sea have words to denote the first and second numerals only, any addition to that number being shown by the fingers of the hand, and, if these are insufficient, by including the toes."¹²⁶

Thus the first great discovery in the field of numbers was made when it struck some prehistoric genius that he could check things off upon his fingers, and so "five" was the first terminus in numerals. There is a mass of evidence of all sorts to show how distinct a stage this was in the development of numbers. Πεμπάζειν, which means "to count" in the Greek of Homer and Æschylus, is derived from πέμπε, Aeolic for πέντε, "five," and originally meant "to count on the five fingers." The Roman numerals from one to five represent one finger, two fingers, three fingers, four fingers, and the whole hand.¹²⁷ Five, *quinque*, *cinq*, *fünf*, are all akin to the Sanskrit "pani," "hand."¹²⁸ "Five" is the same word as "hand" in the language of Labrador, of Siam, of Tibet, and indeed in the speech of savage peoples all over the world.

The next advance was when early man discovered that he had two hands and could continue to check things off on his fingers until he reached ten. The Zulu says for "six" "tatisitupha," which means "taking the thumb," that is, one has counted all the fingers on the one hand, and begun with the thumb on the other. With the Tamanacs of the Orinoco "six" means "one on the other hand," and so on up to "ten," "both hands."¹²⁹ The Zamuca and Muysca Indians for "five" say "hand finished," for "six" "one on the other hand."¹³⁰ It is natural that quinary numeration should have left its traces in several directions. The negroes of Senegal count one, two, three, four, five, five-one, five-two, etc. The Roman numerals do the same; VI, VII, VIII is simply a graph of five-one, five-two, five-three. There is a trace of the same thing in Welsh, where "un-ar-bymtheg, dau-ar-bymtheg," "sixteen, seventeen," are simply "one-and-fifteen, two-and-fifteen." But decimal counting is by far the most common, and the fact that it is shows how important a landmark in the history of civilization was reached when man learned to count to the limit of his fingers. The Hebrew word for "eleven" is "ashtei," akin to "ashtoth" "a thought," probably because it meant at first "ten counted upon the fingers, and *one in thought*."¹³¹ And in every language ten becomes a point of departure for the higher numbers. In English "thirteen, fourteen, fifteen," are merely "three-ten, four-ten, five-ten."

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Now it is to be observed that many children's rhymes preserve more or less distinct traces of the stages through which early man has passed in learning to count. Where numbers are quoted they usually run up to *five* or to *ten* :

One's none,
Two's some,
Three's a many,
Four's a penny,
Five's a little hundred.

There was a time in the childhood of the race, as there is in the infancy of the individual, when *five* was the limit of definite conception in number : everything beyond was a multitude.

Even when that stage is passed, *five* remains a halting place, where you take breath before the perilous passage to ten. Many children's rhymes pause at *five*, even when they go on to higher numbers :

One, two, three, four, five,
I caught a hare alive,
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,
I let her go again !

Most nursery rhymes that are based upon number end with *ten* or *twenty* :

One, two, buckle my shoe,
Three, four, shut the door,
Five, six, pick up sticks,
Seven, eight, lay them straight,
Nine, ten, a good fat hen,
Eleven, twelve, dig and delve,

Thirteen, fourteen, maids a-courting,
 Fifteen, sixteen, maids a-kissing,
 Seventeen, eighteen, maids a-waiting,
 Nineteen, twenty, my plate's empty !

It was a very natural development when once number had become familiar to make a series of numbers a sort of mnemonic basis, and we find that this has been done all over Europe. Sometimes it is merely a farcical exercise of the memory, as in the modern (and therefore uninteresting) examples, "Twelve huntsmen with horns and hounds," and "One old ox opening oysters." But sometimes the scheme is entirely serious—an attempt to fix in the memory, by means of numbers, the most solemn facts of religion.

There is an interesting example of a number-rhyme of this sort in the Jewish Liturgy used at the Seder service on Passover Eve. It is known as "Ehad Mi Yodea'" ("One: who knows?") from the Aramaic words with which it begins. After the addition of each new line, all the earlier lines have to be repeated, in the familiar fashion. It begins :

One : who knows ? One : I know : One is our God in
 heaven and earth.

Two ? . . . There are two tables of the Covenant.

Three ? . . . There are three Patriarchs.

Four ? . . . There are four mothers in Israel.

Five ? . . . There are five books of Moses.

Six ? . . . There are six books of the Mishnah.

Seven ? . . . There are seven days of the week.

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- Eight ? . . . There are eight days before circum-
cision.
Nine ? . . . There are nine months before birth.
Ten ? . . . There are ten Commandments.
Eleven ? . . . There are eleven stars.¹³²
Twelve ? . . . There are twelve tribes of Israel.
Thirteen ? . . . There are thirteen attributes of God.¹³³

This is found in Pesah haggadahs since the fifteenth century. But in all likelihood it was adapted from a Christian chant of the Creed which goes farther back still. This begins :

Dic mihi quid sit unus ?
Unus est verus Deus, qui regnat in coelis.

Dic mihi quid sint duo ?
Duo tabulae Moysis.
Unus est verus Deus, qui regnat in coelis.

Dic mihi quid sint tres ?
Tres Patriarchae.
Duae tabulae Moysis.
Unus est verus Deus, qui regnat in coelis.¹³⁴

The whole series is : One, God ; Two, the Tables of Moses ; Three, the three Patriarchs ; Four, the four Evangelists ; Five, the five Wise Virgins ; Six, the six water-pots at Cana ; Seven, the seven Sacraments ; Eight, the eight Beatitudes ; Nine, the nine choirs of Angels ; Ten, the Ten Commandments ; Eleven, the Eleven Thousand Virgins ; Twelve, the Twelve Apostles.

This is closely parallel to the Modern Greek chant of *The Ten Numbers* :

- I wish to say One : One only Lord.
 We praise Thee, we glorify
 Thee, O Lord !
- Two : Second is the Holy Virgin,
 One only Lord.
 We praise Thee . . .
- Three : Three are the Persons of the Holy
 Trinity.
- Four : Four are the Evangelists.
- Five : Five are the choirs of Virgins.
- Six : Six-winged are [the angels] of
 God.
 (Ἑξαπτέρυγμα Θεοῦ)
- Seven : Seven are the stars of heaven.
- Eight : Eight tunes we chant at church.
 (Ὅχτῳ ἤχοι ψάλλονται)
- Nine : Nine are the orders of angels.
- Ten : Ten are the Commandments.¹³⁵

The Latin chant has survived with hardly a variation as a folk song in Germany :

- Good friend, I ask thee. Good friend, what dost thou
 ask me ? Tell me what is one ? One is the Lord
 God, Who lives and rules the heaven and the earth.
- What is two ? The two Tables of Moses.
- What is three ? The three Patriarchs.
- What is four ? The four Evangelists.
- What is five ? The five wounds of Christ.
- What is six ? The six water-pots of Cana.
- What is seven ? The seven Sacraments.
- What is eight ? The eight Beatitudes.
- What is nine ? The nine choirs of Angels.
- What is ten ? The Ten Commandments.
- What is eleven ? The Eleven Thousand Virgins.
- What is twelve ? The Twelve Apostles.¹³⁶

It has survived also as a popular rhyme in Italy :¹³⁷

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One and first is the Lord God, ever ready to help us !

Two stands for the keys of heaven.

Three stands for the three Patriarchs.

Four stands for the four columns that support the world

—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Five stands for the five wounds of Christ.

Six stands for the six cocks that crowed in Galilee (*Sei sono i sei galli che cantorno in Galilea*).

Seven stands for the seven tapers that burnt in Jerusalem.

Eight stands for the octave of Christ.

Nine stands for the nine choirs of angels.

Ten stands for the ten years of Christ (*Deici e la diecenna di Cristo*).

Eleven stands for the crowning with thorns.

Twelve stands for the Twelve Apostles.

Some of the variations here are mysterious. The six cocks probably owe their existence to an accident of assonance—*galli* and *Galilea*. "The octave of Christ" is most likely the eight-day festival of Christmas. But I cannot imagine what "the ten years of Christ" may mean, or what is the association of eleven with the crown of thorns.

The mediaeval chant has also survived as a children's rhyme in Scotland, but in a strangely dishevelled condition. The beginning is :

We will a' gae sing, boys :
Where will we begin, boys ?
We'll begin the way we should,
And we'll begin at one, boys.

The rhyme then proceeds, after the addition of each new line repeating all that has gone before, until you get the whole series in the final repetition :

We'll begin where we left off,
And we'll begin at twelve, boys.

What will be our twelve, boys ?

Twelve's the Twelve Apostles ;
Eleven's maidens in a dance ;
Ten's the Ten Commandments ;
Nine's the Muses of Parnassus ;
Eight's the table rangers ;
Seven's the stars of heaven ;
Six the echoing waters ;
Five's the hymnlers o' my bower ;
Four's the gospel-makers ;
Three, three thrivers ;
Twa's the lily and the rose,
That shine baith red and green, boys ;
My only ane she walks alane
And evermair has dune, boys.¹³⁸

This is very instructive. It is curious to see what has gone, and what has remained. The Reformation has banished the distinctively Roman elements, of course : the seven sacraments have become the seven stars of heaven ; the nine muses, whose acquaintance had been made in the Latin classes of the parish school, have taken the place of the nine choirs of angels which mediaeval Christianity inherited from the pseudo-Dionysius ; and the Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne, of whom a Scottish schoolboy had never heard, have also gone, though they have left a trace in the " maidens in a dance."

It is more strange that some of the details common

to the faith of all Christians should have been obscured. Distorted as it is, one can still see in the "only ane" who "walks alane, and evermair has dune" the allusion to the Deity. And "the echoing waters" preserves a faint trace of the six water-pots of Cana. The Twelve Apostles, the Ten Commandments, and the Four Evangelists have survived undisguised. But it is singular that the lines annexed to *five* and *eight* should be so hopelessly corrupt.

This chant of the Creed does not seem to have survived amongst children in England, as it has done in Scotland, but it has been kept alive among adults as a song. Various correspondents recorded it, many years ago, as sung by the boatmen at Bideford, by old shepherds in Norfolk, at a harvest supper in Wiltshire, and as a Christmas carol in Somerset.¹³⁹ In all these examples it was more or less corrupt, but beneath several of the corruptions the original could be readily discerned. For instance, six was associated, in one version, with "the charming waiters" (!), which looks sufficiently bizarre, until you recollect that "the charmèd waters" would be an admirable phrase for the water made wine.¹⁴⁰

One version of the song, which used to be sung with much solemnity at harvest suppers in the village of Beeston in Norfolk, is as follows :

I'll sing the twelve O's.
 What mean the twelve O's ?
 Twelve's the twelve Apostles O !

Eleven's the eleven Evangelists.
Ten's the ten Commandments.
Nine's the gable rangers.
Eight's the bright walkers.
Seven's the seven stars in the sky.
Six is the provokers.
Five's the thimble in the bowl.
Four's the gospel makers.
Three, three's the rare O !
Two, two's the lily-white boys
That's clothed all in green O !
And when the one is left alone
No more it can be seen O !¹⁴¹

The English, Scottish, Italian, and German versions are clearly descendants of the mediaeval Latin chant of the Creed. The fact that some of the versions end at *twelve*, instead of the natural *ten*, is probably due to the attraction exercised by the number of the Apostles. The Jewish rhyme was carried further, to avoid the Christian associations of twelve, and to end with the familiar theological formula of the thirteen attributes of God.

There are some variants that may indicate an origin much more remote than the Latin chant. There is a very widespread prejudice against numbering persons or things.¹⁴² Lapps at one end of the world, and Hottentots at the other, equally object to be counted, and so do numberless other tribes, in every region of the earth. There are plentiful traces of the prejudice in Europe. In Lincolnshire and other parts of England it is regarded as unwise to count the lambs ; so with

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cattle in the Shetlands, and loaves in Scotland, and dumplings in Franconia, and eggs in Denmark. Now, there are cases where things must be counted, and this seems to have led to the dodge of substituting the mention of something else for the numeral as a way of avoiding ill luck. Thus at Oran, in counting the measures of grain you should say for one, "In the name of God!"; for two, "Hospitality of the Prophet"; for three, "We shall gain, please God," and so on. Some of the Mohammedans in Palestine, engaged on a like task, say for one, "God is one"; for two, "He has no second"; then three, four, and so on, but they say, for five, "Your hand"; for seven, "A blessing"; for nine, "Pray in the name of Mohammed"—these particular numbers being reckoned unlucky.

It looks as if all these number-chants may have grown out of this—the avoidance of the numeral itself, and the substitution of something else, usually something sacred, so as to escape the unluckiness of counting, in the first place; and then the natural development by which each numeral was replaced by the mention of a sacred thing specially associated with that number.

Then there are many counting-out rhymes which begin with a string of numbers. Thus in France and Switzerland:

Un, deux, trois, j'irai dans le bois,
Quatre, cinq, six, chercher les cerises,
Sept, huit, neuf, dans mon panier neuf,
Dix, onze, douze, elles seront toutes rouges.¹⁴³

(One, two, three, to the wood goes she,
 Four, five, six, cherries she picks,
 Seven, eight, nine, in her basket fine,
 Ten, eleven, twelve (she said),
 All the cherries are red, red, red !)

Or in Germany :

Eins, zwei, Polizei,
 Drei, vier, Offizier,
 Fünf, sechs, alte Hex,
 Sieben, acht, gute Nacht,
 Neun, zehn, auf wiedersehen.¹⁴⁴

(One, two, policeman blue,
 Three, four, captain of the corps,
 Five, six, a witch on two sticks,
 Seven, eight, the hour is late,
 Nine, ten, we'll meet again !)

The most interesting examples of the connexion between number and children's rhymes, however, are to be discerned in the counting-out rhymes which begin with " Eena, meena, mina, mo " (or some of the numberless variations of that euphonious formula).

In the county of Durham the rhyme used to run :

Eena, meena, mina, mo,
 Where do all the Frenchmen go ?
 To the East, to the West,
 To the bonny bird's nest ;¹⁴⁵
 Apples in the garden,
 Fishes in the sea,
 If you want a pretty girl,
 Please choose me !

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A Cumberland variant was :

Eena, meena, mina, mo,
Bassa, lena, lina, lo,
A, way, flowers grow
Arrican, barrican,
We, wah, wusp.

This is from Essex :

Eena, deena, dina, dus,
Cattla, weela, wila, wus,
Spit, spot, must be done,
Twiddleum, twaddleum, twenty-one.

This is from Devon :

Eena, meena, mona, mi,
Pasca, lora, vora, vi,
Eggs, butter, cheese, bread,
Stick, stock, stone-dead.

This is universal in America :

Eena, meena, mina, mo,
Catch a nigger by his toe,
If he hollers, let him go,
Eena, meena, mina, mo.

Similar rhymes could be quoted from all over Britain and the United States, and some parallels are found in Holland and Germany.

But there are some instances where a numerical element may be seen at once by the student of folk-lore, and seen to be extremely significant. For example, a rhyme used in Kirkcudbrightshire is :

Seentie, teentie,
Tennera, mennera,
Bamfra, leedra,
Hover, dover,
Saw the King o' Hazle-pazle
Jumping ower Jerusalem dykes,
Playing on his wee wee pipes.

These are from Fraserburgh in Aberdeenshire :

Eetern, feetern, penny, pump,
A' the laddies in a lump,
Sax or saiven in a clew
A' made wi' candy glue.

Heetum, peetum, penny, pie,
Pop a lorie, jinkie, jye,
An, tan, toap,
Stan' ye oot bye
For a bonny penny pie.¹⁴⁶

An Edinburgh version was :

Inty, tinty, tethery, methery,
Bank for over, Dover, ding,
Aut, taut, tooch,
Up the Causey, down the Cross,
There stands a bonny white horse,
It can gallop, it can trot,
It can carry the mustard pot,
One, two, three, out goes she !

At the Ayr Academy, the famous school established in the eleventh century by Alexander III of Scotland, there is still extant a counting-out formula which is reported to run : " Zinty, tinty, tethera, pethera, bumf, aleeter, aseeter, over, dover, ding." A rhyme from the county of Durham runs :

"Inty, tinty, tethera, bethera, lery, ory, dory, dickerus." Hundreds of examples of these counting-out rhymes have been collected and printed. And from a careful study of these, with their innumerable and absurd variations, this singular fact emerges : there are plain traces left which connect these rhymes with the Welsh language, and with what is called the "shepherd's score," and therefore ultimately with the Celtic speech of Britain in prehistoric days. The Aberdeenshire variant, for example, begins : "Eetern, feetern, penny, pump." Compare this jingle, which looks so grotesque, with the first five numerals in Welsh : "Un, dau, tri, pedwar, pump." The relation is obvious.

The whole relation becomes clearer, however, through another singular survival, the "shepherd's score."¹⁴⁷ One of the writer's earliest recollections is of sitting on his father's knee, as a very little child and being amused by the recitation of the words which the old shepherds in Lincolnshire used in counting their sheep : "Yan, tan, tethera, pethera, pimp, sethera, lethera, hovera, covera, dik, yan-a-dik, tan-a-dik, tethera-dik, pethera-dik, bumfit, yan-a-bumfit, tan-a-bumfit, tethera-bumfit, pethera-bumfit, figgit." Numbers like these have been used by shepherds from time immemorial in many parts of England, especially northern and eastern, and in the lowlands of Scotland. In Essex the numbers are reported to run : "In, tin, tethera, fethera, fip, lethera, methera, co, debem, dic." In the North Riding of Yorkshire : "Yain, tain,

eddero, peddero, pits, tater, later, overo, covero, disc." In the west of the county of Durham: "Yan, tyan, tether, methar, pip, teezer, heezer, corner, casher, dik." In Cumberland: "Aina, peina, para, peddera, pimp, ithy, mithy, owerar, lowerar, dig." In Scotland: "Aina, peina, para, peppera, pen, hasee, nasee, nusee, nottical, hen." One is impressed equally with the hopeless corruption of some numbers in the series and with the steady persistence of others.¹⁴⁸ There can at least be no doubt about the connexion of "pethera," "peddera," "peppera," "fethera" with the Welsh "pedwar"; or of "pimp," "pip," "fip" with the Welsh "pump"; or of "dik," "dig," "disc" with the Welsh "dig." The numbers four, five, ten, are, in Breton, "pevar, pemp, dek," and in Cornish, "peswere, pemp, dek." (It is a remarkable fact that Cornish fishermen within the last fifty years still counted their mackerel by the Cornish numbers.) Then the "shepherd's score" shares with Welsh another characteristic—a trace of the quinary method of enumeration. In Welsh fifteen is "pymtheg," sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen are "unarbymtheg," "dauarbymtheg," "triarbymtheg," "pedwarbymtheg," that is, "one-and-fifteen," "two-and-fifteen," "three-and-fifteen," "four-and-fifteen." Now the "shepherd's score," in its many variants, runs up to "bumfit," "pompet," "bum," or "bub," and then resumes, "yan-a-bumfit, tan-a-bumfit, tethera-bumfit, pethera-bumfit," or "aina-pompet, peina-pompet,

para-pompet, pethera-pompet," or whatever it may be. It is significant that an old shepherd at Winteringham in Lincolnshire who recited the numbers before an inquirer "paused at every *fifth* word."¹⁴⁹

It is obvious that the "Inty, tinty, tethera, methera, . . . over, dover, ding" of the Edinburgh jingle is simply the "Yan, tan, tethera, methera, . . . overa, covera, dik" of the "shepherd's score," in one or other of its variations. It is equally plain that the "Seentie, teentie, tennera, mennera, hover, dover" of the Kirkcudbrightshire rhyme is only a slightly more corrupt version of the same numerals. And the "Inty, tinty, tethery, methery" rhyme is apparently nothing more than a fragmentary and debased version of the score itself, without any additions. The version of the "shepherd's score" that was current in the neighbourhood of Yarmouth ran: "Ina, mina, tethera, methera, pin, sithra, lithra, cothra, hothra, dic." The relation is obvious between the beginning of this and the widely spread counting-out rhymes of the "Eena, meena, mina, mo" type in all its bewildering varieties. The first words of the familiar rhyme, *Hickory, dickory, dock, The mouse ran up the clock*, are probably a corrupt form of the numerals eight, nine, ten, "hovera," "covera," "dik" in the "shepherd's score."

The conclusion is manifestly that the numerals of the prehistoric Celts, the people of these lands before Cæsar or Hengist came, have survived in three forms—most perfectly, of course, in Welsh ;

less perfectly, but still plainly enough, in the "shepherd's score"; and, almost unrecognizably, in a hopelessly corrupt state, in some of the children's counting-out rhymes which we have quoted.

Romantic as it looks, it is natural enough. The shepherds of the conquering Romans and Saxons would belong to the subject race, and would use their own language in their occupation.¹⁵⁰ And the children—who are always the most rigid conservatives of the race—would continue to use the old numbers in their games long after the language to which they belonged had been forgotten.

CHAPTER IV

TRADITION AND HISTORY

THERE is one constant element in children's tales that probably dates from that dim age when history was at its very beginning. Every one must have noticed the large part played in our nursery tales by fairies, dwarfs, and giants. There can be very little doubt that the belief in such beings dates from some remote period when races with different physical characteristics and different levels of culture found themselves in contact. If a race of small stature were driven out by a race of larger mould, one may be sure that the legends of the little people would tell of awesome giants. And if a people fairly advanced in the arts of life dispossessed a smaller stock whose manner of life was more rudimentary, it is quite certain that the legends of the higher race would tell of dwarfs, who lived in caves—a stunted, saturnine people—and fairies, who flitted about the forest by night—a small, wild, elusive folk.

Now we know that this very contact between a race of small stature which was still in the Stone Age and a taller people who had learned the use of metal did actually take place in this land. The

aborigines of Britain, or at any rate the earliest inhabitants of whom we really know anything, were the people who buried their dead in the "long barrows." They were short, swarthy, and physically feeble. They dwelt in caves and their weapons were of stone. The evidence for all this has come from the patient exploration of the "long barrows." No trace of metal has ever been found in any undisturbed part of a "long barrow," and pottery is very uncommon. This dolichocephalic (long-skulled) race, generally called "Iberian," is still represented in some parts of Ireland, and of Wales, and of Central France, and by the Basques and Berbers.

Then the Celts came. They were tall, fair, and muscular, and they introduced bronze weapons into Britain. They buried their dead in "round barrows," which were constructed in imitation of the round huts in which the living dwelt, exactly as the "long barrows" of the Iberians were copied from their cave-dwellings. The Celts were brachycephalic (short-skulled), and their speech belonged to the Aryan family of languages. Pottery is commonly present in the "round barrows," and bronze is occasionally found.¹⁵¹

We know that the stature of the Celts greatly impressed the Romans and Greeks. Cæsar speaks of their *mirifica corpora*, and Strabo declares that he saw in Rome some young men of the Coritavi, a British tribe from the region of Lincolnshire, and "they were taller by six inches than anyone else

in the city." As a matter of fact, the average stature of the Celts, as judged from the exploration of the "round barrows," exceeded that of the present inhabitants of this country.¹⁵² The small Iberians would regard the Celts as immensely tall, and the mythical faculty would soon make them incredible giants. The Celts would think of the little, dark, weakly Iberians, with their stone weapons and their underground dwellings, as a dwarfish, elvish, subterranean people, and legend would continually decrease their stature and exaggerate their elusive remoteness.

Almost every nursery tale has a malicious giant, or a malignant dwarf, or a mischievous fairy among its dramatis personæ, as *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Tom Thumb*, and *The Sleeping Beauty* alone would be sufficient to remind us.

Then many children's rhymes undoubtedly contain recollections of chronicled events of history. Some students of folk-lore have expressed a doctrinaire disbelief in the historic element in popular tradition, which is surprising, for one would have thought that they, of all people, would have been impressed by the astonishing tenacity and the astonishing truthfulness of the popular memory, where reasonable allowance is made for the mythical mould into which it sometimes compresses the historic fact. Here is an instance where popular tradition retained a characteristic detail for well over a dozen centuries. There was a cairn, which was removed in 1832, near Mold, in

Flintshire. "It was believed in the country around to be haunted by a spectre in gold armour, and when more than three hundred loads of stones had been carted away the workmen came to the skeleton of a tall and powerful man placed at full length. He had been laid there clad in a finely wrought corslet of gold, with a lining of bronze; the former was found to be a thin plate of the precious metal, measuring three feet seven inches long by eight inches wide. . . . The burial belongs to an age when cremation was not entirely obsolete in this country, and we should probably not be wrong in attributing it to the time of the Roman occupation."¹⁵³

There can be no doubt at all that our nursery rhymes and tales contain historic elements, and absolutely conclusive evidence as to the historicity of some of these may be given.

There is a rhyme current in the south of England which begins *John Ball Shot Them All*. It goes on to allege that "John Patch made the match, John Clint made the flint, John Puzzle made the muzzle, John Crowder made the powder, John Block made the stock, John Wyming made the priming, John Brammer made the hammer, John Scott made the shot." "But," it repeats after the addition of each line, "John Ball shot them all!" It is plain that most of these names are mere accommodations to the rhyme. John Patch has been called into existence to rhyme with "match," John Clint owes his name to the fact that he is followed by "the

flint," and so on. But the most prominent name, the name which comes first, and recurs after each added line, is a historic name. John Ball was the priest whose preaching was behind the peasants' revolt of 1381. He described himself as "Saint Mary's priest at York," which probably means that he had been a secular priest attached to St. Mary's Abbey there. He did the great work of his life, however, in Essex, especially round about Colchester. His preaching seems to have begun more than twenty years before 1381.¹⁵⁴ Already in 1366 he was cited before the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Langham, and imprisoned. He was accused of preaching manifold errors and scandals. He does not appear to have been checked in the least by this, and he was afterwards excommunicated by both the Bishop of Norwich and the Archbishop of Canterbury. He seems to have embraced the doctrines of Wyclif, more or less, and continued to preach in market-places and graveyards when the churches were closed to him. In 1376 there was an order for his arrest as an excommunicate person, and in 1381, probably about the end of April, he was lodged in the Archbishop's prison at Maidstone. One of the first acts of the insurgents was to free him. At Blackheath, on June 13th, he preached his famous sermon to the rebels, on the text :

Whan Adam dalf and Eve span,
Who was thanne a gentilman ?

He is said to have been one of those who rushed into

the Tower when Archbishop Sudbury was seized and beheaded. He was present at Smithfield when the King met the insurgents, and probably witnessed the fall of Tyler. On the collapse of the revolt Ball fled to Coventry. There he was seized, and taken thence to St. Albans to be tried. He bore himself bravely during the trial, and refused to petition the King for a pardon. He was sentenced as a traitor, and he was hanged, drawn, and quartered at St. Albans on July 15th.¹⁵⁵

The rhyme has preserved the unquestionable fact, largely forgotten until it was disinterred by modern students of mediaeval history, that it was John Ball's propaganda that made the revolt possible, and that though Wat Tyler might be the head of the movement, John Ball was the heart and soul of it. It *was* John Ball who "shot them all."

The tale of *Bluebeard* seems to be an intricate mingling of history and legend. Gilles de Retz, Sieur de Laval, Marshal of France, who polluted the fifteenth century by his existence, was nicknamed "Barbe Bleue" because of his blue-black beard. He was persuaded by an Italian alchemist that his strength could be restored by bathing in the blood of little children. He had many children entrapped and murdered in his castle of Champtocé on the Loire. The suspicions of the countryside were roused, and finally Barbe Bleue died at the stake at Nantes in the year 1440.¹⁵⁶

The whole incident of the murdered wives, substi-

tuted for the murdered children, seems to have been added to the tale from the Breton legend of Comor the Cursed, Count of Poher, who married and murdered four wives in succession, and buried them in the chapel of the castle. Then he wedded the beautiful Trifine. As she is praying in the chapel the tombs of the murdered wives open, and each appears holding in her hand the knife or the cord with which she was done to death. Trifine sends to her kinsmen for aid. Then Comor pursues her into the forest and cuts off her head. Saint Gildas makes her body carry her head back to Comor's castle, which is overthrown when the saint flings a handful of dust at it. Then he restores Trifine to life and she retires to a convent. Then Comor is defeated and slain by the prince whose place he has usurped. The tale of *Bluebeard* as we know it revolves around the incident of the forbidden chamber—a familiar device which occurs in stories all over the world.

The story of *Whittington and his Cat* preserves a historic name and a historic fact, but the tale itself is anything but historic. Richard Whittington is a real personage, and he was thrice Lord Mayor of London ; the rest of the story, however, is one of those persistent legends that are found everywhere. Richard Whittington was never a poor boy : he was the son of a knight in Gloucestershire, and he inherited a large fortune. He was a mercer, and furnished cloth of gold for the bridal outfit of the daughters of Henry IV, married abroad in 1401

and 1406. He also advanced large sums of money to the Crown for the purposes of the French wars. He was Sheriff in 1393-4, and Lord Mayor in 1397-8, 1406-7, and 1419-20. He was buried in the Church of St. Michael, called Paternoster in the Royal, which he had rebuilt, and his epitaph described him as *flos mercatorum*. He had founded, in connexion with the church in which he was afterwards buried, a college and an almhouse. The college disappeared at the Dissolution, but the almhouse survived, and was rebuilt after the fire. It still exists in Highgate.¹⁵⁷ He also rebuilt Newgate. His great wealth, his civic eminence, and his large charities seem to have impressed the popular imagination, and made him the hero of a popular legend. For the tale of a poor boy who has nothing in the world but a cat, and whose cat makes his fortune, is found in every land in Europe, and in many other parts of the world as well. *Puss in Boots* is a variant of it. In the fifteenth century Arlotta tells it of a merchant of Genoa. The core of the legend is, in fact, one of the most widespread of the notions of primitive fiction—the incident of the friendly animal.

The first references to the story in connexion with Whittington seem to belong to the early years of the seventeenth century. *The History of Richard Whittington, of his lowe birthe, his great fortune, as yt was plaied by the Prynces Servants*, was licensed in 1605.¹⁵⁸ There are references to the tale in Thomas Heywood's *If you Know not Me, you Know*

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Nobody (1606) and in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1611). The earliest form of the story in the British Museum is a black-letter ballad of 1641, *London's Glory and Whittington's Renown; or a looking glass for the citizens of London; being a remarkable story how Sir Richard Whittington . . . came to be three times Lord Mayor of London, and how his rise was by a cat.*

There is a rhyme which runs :

Dr. Faustus was a good man,
He whipped his scholars now and then,
When he whipped them he made them dance,
Out of Scotland into France,
Out of France into Spain,
And then he whipped them back again !

Here we have the name, and it would seem also a distorted memory of the magical powers of that hazy figure who has become the hero of the greatest poem of modern Germany. The doggerel is found in a slightly different version as a counting-out rhyme in the west of Scotland :

Mister Foster's a very good man,
Soops the college now and than,
When he's done he takes a dance
Up to London, over to France,
With a black beaver and a red snout—
Stand you there, for you are out !¹⁵⁹

The real Faust, the actual personage around whom the legend began to gather, lived at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Trithemius (Johann Trittenheim), the Abbot of Spanheim, tells us that

he met at Gelnhausen, in May, 1506, a certain Magister Georgius Sabellicus, who described himself as "Faustus Junior, fons necromanticorum." (This assumption of the name of Faustus *the younger* seems to indicate plainly the existence of an earlier Faust legend.) In 1513 Conradus Mutianus Rufus (Conrad Mudt), the friend of Melancthon, spoke of meeting at Erfurt "quidam chiromanticus Georgius Faustus." There are other contemporary references to him, and by 1548 we find the stories of his riding on a barrel of wine out of Auerbach's cellar in Leipzig, and being carried off by the Devil at last—both events being carefully dated about 1525. The anonymous life of Faust which fixed the general type of the legend was published by Johannes Spiess at Frankfort in 1587. This first introduces the name of Mephistopheles as Faust's familiar spirit. The first English version of the legend was probably *A Ballad of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, the Great Conjuror*, which appeared within a few months of the Frankfort narrative. Marlowe's *Faustus* probably appeared in 1589, and was certainly based upon *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr. John Faustus*. The earliest extant copy of this appears to belong to 1592, but there must have been earlier editions. By the beginning of the seventeenth century Faust was a stock subject for puppet-plays in Germany. Heine saw the puppet-play as late as 1826. Goethe's first draft of *Faust* was almost entirely based upon the story as represented by the puppets. There

has been considerable confusion between Faustus and Johann Fust of Mainz, the colleague of Gutenberg, the inventor of printing. The magician of the legend has got his name, Johann, instead of the Georgius with which he began, and in the puppet-play the sorcerer is allocated to Mainz, instead of the Wittenberg of the original legend. Our nursery rhyme has preserved the necromancer's name, and a faint memory of his supernatural powers, since he is able to transport his scholars from one land to another, whether by a whip or a wand.

There is, apparently, some historic basis for the rhyme of *Little Jack Horner*. A Somersetshire tradition, recorded many years ago, is to the effect that John Horner was the steward of the Abbot of Glastonbury, and that he was sent to London with a Christmas pie as a present for Henry VIII—a pie containing the title deeds of several manors in the county of Somerset. On the way he “put in his thumb and pulled out a plum”—in plain language, he abstracted the title deed of the manor of Mells, and kept it for himself.¹⁶⁰ Another version of the tradition says that the gift was sent by the abbot to the Queen's brother, Edward Seymour, afterwards Duke of Somerset.¹⁶¹ This would fix the incident about 1536-7. There is some air of likelihood about this detail. For though Edward Seymour afterwards developed into a convinced Protestant, Queen Jane's sympathies were all the other way. On the

outbreak of the rebellion in the North known as the "Pilgrimage of Grace," Cardinal du Bellay was told that she had begged the King on her knees to restore the dissolved abbeys, and had been warned by him not to meddle with affairs of State if she wished to avoid the doom of her predecessor.

The whole tradition is not so fantastically unlikely as it might appear at first sight. The smaller monasteries were dissolved first, and consequently there were some few years during which the larger and richer abbeys still existed, but with the shadow of dissolution upon them. Many of them did attempt, in this interval, to bribe Cromwell and the King to leave them alone. Glastonbury was the richest abbey in the kingdom,¹⁶² and at the beginning of 1539 it was the only religious house in Somerset left untouched. As a matter of fact, Whiting, the last abbot, appears several times in the State papers as presenting Christmas gifts to the King. This practice does not seem to have been uncommon. In 1530 the Prior of Lanthony at Gloucester sent a Christmas gift of "cheese, carp, and baked lampreys" to Henry VIII at Windsor, and the bearer was rewarded with twenty shillings.¹⁶³ Neither is there anything really incredible about the pie. It was a favourite trick in the sixteenth century to conceal all sorts of surprises in a pie. Another nursery rhyme refers to this practice, and records what may have happened many a time :

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
 Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie,
 When the pie was opened, the birds began to sing,
 Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the King ?

Epulario, or the Italian Banquet, which was published in 1598, actually contains a receipt "to make pies that the Birds may be alive in them, and flie out when it is cut up." Every reader of *Peeveril of the Peak* will remember Jeffery Hudson, the famous dwarf that Scott introduced into the tale. Jeffery is historic, of course ; are not his waistcoat and breeches of blue satin preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford ? It is recorded that on a visit of Charles I and Henrietta Maria to the Duke of Buckingham at Burleigh-on-the-Hill, the Duke had Jeffery served up at table in a cold pie which the Duchess presented to the Queen.

But whether there be any truth in the story about the abbot's pie or not, there can be no doubt at all that the rhyme records the historic fact that John Horner managed to do very well for himself in those disturbed times. His name appears in Cardinal Pole's Pension Book, with a pension charged upon Keynsham, *nuper Monasterium*.¹⁶⁴ Thomas and John Horner requested to purchase rents in Batcombe, on May 22, 1538.¹⁶⁵ Richard Pollard wrote to Cromwell in November, 1539, relating the execution of Richard Whiting, the last Abbot of Glastonbury, who "toke hys deathe very pacyently," and recommending "my Brother Paulett" for the surveyorship of Glastonbury.

The letter proceeds : " I assure youre lordshyp he hathe byn very dylygent and dyvers other by hys meanys to serve the kyng at this time according to hys dewtye and ryght, so was Nycholas Fitz James, John Sydnam, and Thomas Hornar, your servants."¹⁶⁶ It is to be noticed that Paulet, Fitz-james, Sydenham, and Thomas Horner were all on the complaisant jury that condemned the abbot.¹⁶⁷ Thomas and John Horner request to purchase Mells Rectory and the farm of the manor of Mells, with other lands and tenements, in May, 1543. And a lease of the demesne lands of Stratton, together with some coal mines, was surrendered in June, 1544, in order that another patent might be granted to John Horner.¹⁶⁸ The arms of the Horner family—three talbots passant argent on a sable field—were granted in 1584, less than fifty years after the suppression of Glastonbury Abbey. An old local distich says :

Wyndham, Horner, Popham, and Thynne,
When the Abbot went out, they came in.¹⁶⁹

The family of Horner are still seated at Mells, and are the lineal descendants of the hero who is said to have " put in his thumb and pulled out a plum, and said ' What a good boy am I ! ' "

The nursery rhymes of France and Germany also record some famous names and memorable circumstances of history. There is a German cradle-song which runs :

" Buko von Halberstadt
 Bring doch meinem Kinde was."
 " Was soll ich ihm bringen ? "
 " Rothe Schuh mit Ringen.
 Schöne Schuh mit Gold beschlagen
 Die soll unser Kindchen tragen."¹⁷⁰

(" Buko of Halberstadt,
 Bring my child something that
 He will like ! " " What shall I bring ? "
 " A pair of shoes with a golden ring,
 Red shoes with buckles neat
 That will fit his little feet ! ")

The rhyme has preserved for nearly a thousand years the name of a militant mediaeval bishop. Burckhard, Bishop of Halberstadt, in the eleventh century, was one of the leaders of the Saxon revolt against the Emperor Henry IV. He was captured at the battle of Hohenberg in 1075, and the Emperor sent him into Hungary for safe keeping, but on his way down the Danube he escaped and returned to Saxony. He seems to have been known in his own day as a friend of children : hence, doubtless, the survival of his name in the rhyme.

There is a French *ronde* which has a clear allusion to Joan of Arc. The last lines are :

Une fill' a battu
 Le roi d'Angleterre.

Tout est regagné
 Par une bergère.

Nous pouvons danser,
 Nous n'aurons plus de guerre.¹⁷¹

(A maiden's wondrous fame I sing
Who broke the pride of England's King.

All that we lost in our distress
Has been won back by a shepherdess.

Now dance, dance, dance away,
There'll be no war for many a day !)

There can surely be little doubt that this is the popular remembrance of the Maid and her wonderful exploits for France.

A nursery rhyme current in many parts of Germany runs, in one version :

Der Schwed ist gekommen,
Hat Alles wegg'nommen.
Hat d'Fenster 'neing'schlagen,
Hats Blei 'rausgraben
Hat Kugeln draus gossen,
Hat alles verschossen.¹⁷²

Another version, in dialect, is :

De Schwedli ischt komme
Mit Pfeife und Tromme,
Het d' Fenster igschlage,
Unds Blei devo g'nomme,
Het Chügeli gosse,
Und d' Bure verschosse.¹⁷³

(The Swedes are come
With fife and drum,
The windows they break,
The lead they take,
Bullets they make,
And when the bullets they have got
Everybody's shot !)

This is the remembrance amongst the peasantry of Germany of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. Many a time the Swedes would march into a village, already devastated, perhaps, by the soldiery of Wallenstein, and break the windows for the sake of the lead that fastened the panes together, out of which they would proceed to cast a fresh supply of bullets.

Another rhyme actually preserves one of the great names of the period :

Bet, Kinder, bet,
Morgen kommt der Schwed
Morgen kommt der Oxenstern
Wird die Kinder beten lern.¹⁷⁴

(Pray, children, pray,
The Swedes come to-day,
The children soon will learn to pray
When Oxenstierna comes to-day !)

Count Axel Oxenstierna (1583-1654), one of the greatest statesmen Sweden ever produced, was created Chancellor upon the accession of Gustavus Adolphus in 1611. Though he disapproved of Sweden entering into the war in Germany he was the King's right-hand man during those anxious campaigns, and in 1626 was made governor of the conquered districts in Prussia. After the death of Gustavus it was Oxenstierna who saved the Protestant cause from final ruin. He returned to Sweden in 1636, but he directed the policy of the Protestants in Germany until the Peace of West-

phalia in 1648. It is remarkable that his name should have survived in the popular rhyme, rather than that of his master, the famous monarch described by Rittmeister Dalgetty as " the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and the bulwark of the Protestant faith."

There is another German nursery rhyme which preserves a memory of much later events. There are several variants of it, as is generally the case with rhymes of this sort. This particular version is a counting-out rhyme recorded in Strasburg :

Eins, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16,
17, 18, 19, Zwanzig.

Die Franzosen gingen nach Dantzig ;

Dantzig fing an zu brennen !

Die Franzosen fingen an zu rennen,

Ohne Strumpf und ohne Schuh,

Liefen sie der Heimath zu,

Eins, zwei, drei,

Du bist frei !¹⁷⁵

(One, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, ten.

To Dantzig went a host of Frenchmen,

But when Dantzig was ablaze

The Frenchmen quickly went their ways.

As soon as ever the fire began,

Barefoot, barelegged, home they ran.

One, two, three,

You are free !)

It has been suggested that this rhyme has confused the French occupation of Dantzig with that of Moscow, and has transferred the fire that destroyed the Russian city to the old Hansa town on the

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Baltic. This is possible, but there were considerable fires at Dantzic amid the disorders which accompanied the retirement of the French troops in 1814, and perhaps that would warrant the rhyme as it stands. Though, of course, there is a great and obvious convenience in being able to rhyme the name of the place with "twenty." But this conjecture as to confusion between the two cities seems all the more unnecessary because there is actually another rhyme which preserves the memory of Napoleon's disastrous experience at Moscow, without any mention of the fire, but with the whole emphasis upon the Russian winter :

Eins, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Sieben,
 Wo sind die Franzosen geblieben ?
 Zu Moscau in dem tiefen Schnee,
 Da riefen sie alle, o weh, o weh !
 Wer hilft uns aus dem tiefen Schnee ?¹⁷⁶

(Two, four, six, eight, ten,
 Where are the French soldiers, then ?
 At Moscow in the deep, deep snow,
 There they freeze, and cry, Woe ! woe !
 Who will save us from the snow ?)

And, apart from the memory of specific events, a historic name is often remembered in popular stories. Thus, in a Basque tale belonging to the cycle of which *The Giant with no Heart in His Body* is the type, the hero is named Malbrouk.¹⁷⁷ Though the tale is prehistoric, the name is apparently due to the wandering fame of that great English soldier,

the Duke of Marlborough, perhaps carried to the Pyrenees by the song, "Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre, Mironton, mironton, mirontaine!"¹⁷⁸ We are assured that the French children still sing of the Black Prince.¹⁷⁹ An English lady at a convent in France within the present generation heard the children singing a song of which she can only recall the first line :

Le Prince noir ne connaît pas la haine.

Here is an unmistakable memory of the hero of Crécy and Poitiers—the Prince who "flings o'er many a knightly tale the shadow of his dusky mail." To this day in French folk tales the ogre is often called "Le Sarrasin"—a memory of the Crusades. The name "ogre" itself is historical, for it is simply a corrupted form of the name of the Hungarians, though the Magyars have been confused with the Huns, and both have been confused again with the dreaded Tartars¹⁸⁰

CHAPTER V

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT AND SIMILAR STORIES

EVERYBODY whose native language is English knows that surprising history, *The House that Jack Built*. There are no properties or persons on the stage of the child's fancy that are more fascinating than that wonderful series the malt, and the rat that ate the malt, and the dog that worried the rat, and so on through the motley procession of the cow with the crumpled horn, the maiden all forlorn, the man all tattered and torn, and the priest all shaven and shorn; with, in some versions, the cock that crowed in the morn to waken the priest, and the knife with the handle of horn that killed the cock.

And most people whose early life was passed in the north of England are familiar with a parallel tale, *The Old Woman and Her Pig*. This venerable lady found a sixpence, and, going to the market, bought a pig with it. On the way back the pig refused to jump over a stile, and the old woman called a dog to bite it. When the dog refused, she bade a stick beat the dog. Encountering

thereafter a series of refusals, she summoned the fire to burn the stick, the water to quench the fire, the ox to drink the water, the butcher to kill the ox, the rope to hang the butcher, the rat to gnaw the rope, the cat to kill the rat, and the cow to give milk to the cat. Here a change passes over the spirit of the story: the cow gives the milk, the cat begins to kill the rat, the rat begins to gnaw the rope, and so forth, with the happy result that the pig jumps over the stile, and the Old Woman "gets home to get her Old Man's supper ready!" One version of the tale extends the series: the cow will give the milk if the Old Woman will get some hay, the Old Woman goes to the hay-makers, and they promise her a wisp if she will fetch them some water, whereupon she goes to the stream, and gets it, and all's well that ends well.

These stories raise some most interesting problems. What is the primitive type of this kind of tale? What originated the cumulative form of it? What was the first significance of the persistent series which reaches from the dog to the ox?

At the end of the Seder service in the Jewish Passover Liturgy there are two Aramaic nursery rhymes, one of which is known, from its first words, as *Had Gadya*, חַדְגָּדְיָא. It is certainly the noblest of all the stories of this type.¹⁸¹ It begins: "A kid, a kid! My father bought a kid for two zuzim." Then it proceeds to relate that a cat worried the kid, a dog bit the cat, and so forth. The splendid climax of the tale (possibly influenced

by St. Paul's words in 2 Tim. i, 10) is as follows :
 " Then came the Holy One—blessed be He !—and destroyed the Angel of Death, who had killed the butcher, who had slaughtered the ox, that had drunk the water, that had quenched the fire, that had burned the staff, that had smitten the dog, that had bitten the cat, that had worried the kid, that my father bought for two zuzim. A kid, a kid ! "

This version of the story has a place in the great literature of the world, for Heine makes Jäkel the Fool chant it in *The Rabbi of Bacharach*.¹⁸²

The moral elevation of this version of the tale, and the fact that it can be traced back to the sixteenth century, not unnaturally suggested it as the source of all similar stories.¹⁸³ The Rabbis explained it as a parable of the persecutions of Israel. The Hebrew nation is the kid ; the two zuzim (pieces of money) were Moses and Aaron ; the cat represented Assyria ; the dog, Babylonia ; the stick, Persia ; the fire, Alexander the Great ; the water, Rome ; the ox, the Saracens ; the butcher, the Crusaders ; the Angel of Death, the Turks. The Holy One is the Messiah. The edition of the *Haggadah* printed at Prague in 1526 does not contain the tale, but the edition of 1590, published in the same city, prints it with a German translation.¹⁸⁴

This is certainly the first appearance in print of any of this cycle of stories. There is an early reference to one of them in *Don Quixote*, where

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Cervantes says, describing the *mêlée* at the inn, "As we say, *The cat to the rat, the rat to the rope, the rope to the staff*, so the carter was beating Sancho, and Sancho the servant, and the servant him, and the innkeeper the servant."¹⁸⁵ This is evidence that some story of this sort was familiarly known to the people in Spain in the sixteenth century, for Cervantes' immortal romance was published in 1605.

But the tale goes back much farther than that. It can be traced back to the Middle Ages in connexion with a quaint piece of popular ritual in Germany. In the market-place of Münster in Westphalia there is a beautiful church of the fourteenth century, dedicated to St. Lambert. There is one gruesome detail about the church which always attracts the attention of visitors. On the wall of the tower hang the three iron cages in which the bodies of the Anabaptist fanatics, Bockelson, Knipperdolling, and Krechting, were exposed in 1536. St. Lambert, or Landebert, the patron saint of the church, was Bishop of Maestricht in the seventh century. He was murdered in the fortieth year of his episcopate, having incurred the anger of Pepin of Herstal by boldly rebuking him for vice. His relics were later translated to Liège, and the famous city practically grew up around the Cathedral of St. Lambert, which, unhappily, was destroyed at the French Revolution. St. Lambert was always a popular saint in the Low Countries and in Westphalia : hence the

dedication of the church at Münster. On the eve of St. Lambert's Day, the 17th of September, there used to be in Münster a solemn procession, headed by the Capuchins, the Observants, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans of the city, to the market-place. Arrived there, the procession formed into a great circle, around a sort of shrine, decorated with leaves, and every one danced, while the *Lambertuslied* was sung.¹⁸⁶ It begins : " Der Herr, der schickt den Jäger aus, Sollt' die Birnen schmeissen " (" The Master sent the huntsman out to knock the pears off "). Then the usual course of obstinacy begins : the huntsman will not knock off the pears, the dog will not bite the huntsman, the staff will not beat the dog, and so on. The end of the song tells how the Master sent the Devil to fetch them all, then the ox is willing to drink the water, the water to quench the fire, the fire to burn the staff, the staff to beat the dog, the dog to bite the huntsman, and the huntsman to knock off the pears.

Here one is inclined to suspect at once that we have to do with some ancient heathen ritual, half magical, half religious, connected with the gathering of fruit, and that the association with St. Lambert is due simply to the fact that the fruit would be ripe about the middle of September. The cultus of a local saint might easily absorb an old pagan ritual of this kind. Neither the dance nor the song need surprise us in this connexion. A religious dance by the choristers of Seville Cathedral is still performed at Christmas and Corpus Christi. The

boys are dressed as pages of the time of Philip II, and dance before the High Altar, to the accompaniment of castanets. At Nola, in the neighbourhood of Naples, on St. Paulinus' Day, there was until recently (and perhaps is still) a solemn dance on the piazza in front of the cathedral while the bishop was saying Mass at the High Altar within. The people danced around the shrines of St. Paulinus—"Le Guglie di San Paolino"—which they had previously carried in procession around the city. St. Paulinus was Bishop of Nola in the third century, and is therefore a local saint of great celebrity. In this country, as late as the seventeenth century, the apprentices of York danced in the nave of the minster on Shrove Tuesday. The mediaeval church countenanced a good many popular customs that were not at all specially edifying, and even a good deal of buffoonery at times, as on the Feast of the Ass,¹⁸⁷ when the priest, instead of "Ite, missa est," at the end of Mass, said, "Hee-haw!" and the congregation delightedly responded, "Hee-haw! hee-haw!"

The Münster song and dance on St. Lambert's Eve was kept up, it is said, as late as 1810. The connexion of this particular type of story with the ritual, however, would seem to be accidental, like the presence of the *Had Gadya* variant in the Passover Liturgy; for there are versions of these tales, or parallels to them, in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, Hungarian, Serb, Romaic, Persian, Arabic, Aramaic, Siamese,

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Sanskrit, and in several of the Indian and African languages.

Some of the variants are very pleasant fantasies. A German version, *Ist alles verloren*,¹⁸⁸ has a long series of animals, and ends with the advent of a maiden, who kissed the man, who shot the bear, that killed the wolf, that devoured the fox, that bit the dog, that worried the cat, that caught the rat, that frightened the mouse, that "ate the corn, on a frosty morn, in our cornstack, alas! alack!"

There is a Hottentot version in which the series is maintained with singular fidelity. A cat bites a mouse, a dog worries the cat, a stick beats the dog, fire burns the stick, water quenches the fire, an elephant drinks the water, and an ant bites the elephant.

A Swahili version from Zanzibar begins with the death of a man who is killed by the fall of a tree. The search for the guilty party proceeds through a series which includes the wind, a wall, the rat, the cat, the rope, the knife, the fire, the water, the ox, and an insect which bites the ox, and a gazelle which swallows the insect, and then is killed itself, being the original cause of the fall of the tree and the man's death.¹⁸⁹

A delightful Kabyle version from Algeria¹⁹⁰ begins, "Come, little one, eat thy dinner." The child refuses, whereupon the stick is bidden to beat the little one. The stick refuses, and we encounter the usual series of refusals from the fire, the water, the ox, the knife, the blacksmith, the rope, the rat.

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Then, "Come, cat, and eat the rat." "Bring the rat," says the cat, "and I will eat him." "Why should I be eaten?" says the rat. "Bring the rope and I will gnaw it." "Why should I be gnawed?" says the rope. "Bring the blacksmith and I will hang him." "Why should I be hanged?" says the blacksmith. "Bring the knife and I will break it." "Why should I be broken?" says the knife. "Bring the ox and I will kill him." "Why should I be killed?" says the ox. "Bring the water and I will drink it up." "Why should I be drunk up?" says the water. "Bring the fire and I will quench it." "Why should I be quenched?" says the fire. "Bring the stick and I will burn it." "Why should I be burned?" says the stick. "Bring me the child and I will beat him." "Why should I be beaten?" says the little one. "Bring my dinner and I will eat it!"¹⁹¹

A version from the Punjab relates that a farmer's wife was winnowing, when a crow flew down and picked a grain of corn out of the winnowing basket. The woman threw a clod of earth at the crow, which fell down and dropped the grain of corn into a crack in a tree, so she seized the crow, and said: "Give me back my grain of corn or I will kill you!" The crow could not reach the grain, which had rolled down the crack, so he asked a woodman to fell the tree. The woodman refused, so the crow flew to the palace of the king, and asked him to kill the woodman. The king refused, so the crow asked the queen to coax him. The queen refused,

so the crow asked a snake to bite her. The snake refused, so the crow asked a stick to beat the snake. The stick refused, so the crow asked a fire to burn it. The fire refused, so the crow asked some water to quench it. The water refused, so the crow asked an ox to drink it. The ox refused, so the crow asked a rope to bind it. The rope refused, so the crow asked a mouse to gnaw it. The mouse refused, so the crow asked a cat to catch it. The cat was willing, so the cat began to catch the mouse, the mouse to gnaw the rope, the rope to bind the ox, the ox to drink the water, the water to quench the fire, the fire to burn the stick, the stick to beat the snake, the snake to bite the queen, the queen to coax the king, the king to kill the woodman, and the woodman to fell the tree ; so the crow got the grain of corn again, " and saved his life, from the farmer's wife ! " ¹⁹²

A version in Modern Greek has a long series of animals. It begins with a poor old man who had a cock that used to crow in the morning and awaken him. A fox came and killed the cock, then a dog that killed the fox, then a staff and beat the dog, then a fire and burned the staff, then water and quenched the fire, then an ox and drank the water, then a wolf and killed the ox, then a shepherd and killed the wolf, then a pestilence and killed the shepherd. ¹⁹³

A variant in French begins, *Je te vends le petit Bonhomme*. ¹⁹⁴ It proceeds to offer any intending purchaser the house of *le petit Bonhomme*, the door

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of the house, the lock of the door, and so on, until it ends, breathlessly, "I sell you death, which took the butcher, who seized the mallet, which killed the ox, which drank the water, which quenched the fire, which burned the staff, which beat the dog, which worried the cat, which ate the rat, which killed the mouse, which gnawed the string of the key of the lock of the door of the house of *le petit Bonhomme*!"

This is closely parallel to the German variant *Das Haus vom holzernen Mann*,¹⁹⁵ which substitutes the Devil in the last act. The Devil seizes the butcher, and the whole series recoils to the door of the house of the wooden man.

Several children's games have retained what seems to be the most characteristic and essential part of these stories—that persistent series, the wood, the fire, the water, the ox, the butcher.¹⁹⁶ There is a game called *Garden Gate*, recorded in Dorsetshire, and played by children who impersonate a mother and daughter, and the daughter's companions. The daughter asks leave to go and play, and this is granted. Presently she returns and is asked by the mother where she has been. She replies, "Up to Uncle John's, for half a loaf, half a cheese, and half a pound of butter." Then this dialogue ensues:

"Where's my share?"

"Up in the cupboard."

"Tain't there then!"

"Then the cat ate it."

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" And where's the cat ? "
 " Up on the wood " (i.e. the faggots).
 " And where's the wood ? "
 " Fire burnt it."
 " And where's the fire ? "
 " Water douted it " (i.e. put it out).
 " And where's the water ? "
 " Ox drank it."
 " And where's the ox ? "
 " Butcher killed it."
 " And where's the butcher ? "
 " Behind the door cracking nuts, and you may eat
 the shells if you like ! " ¹⁹⁷

After giving this very disrespectful answer, the daughter and her companions run away, and the mother pursues them.

Another game, known as *Dump* in England, and *Club Fist* in Georgia, also retains the complete series. The players make a pile of fists, and a player who remains apart says to the child whose hand is uppermost : " What's that ? " The answer is, " A pear." " Take it off or I'll knock it off," says the interlocutor. This is repeated to each child, and each withdraws his hand, until only one is left. Then comes the illuminating dialogue :

" What have you got there ? "
 " Bread and cheese."
 " Where's my share ? "
 " Cat's got it."
 " Where's the cat ? "
 " In the woods."
 " Where's the woods ? "
 " Fire burned it."

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"Where's the fire?"

"Water quenched it."

"Where's the water?"

"Ox drank it."

"Where's the ox?"

"Butcher killed it."

"Where's the butcher?"

"Rope hung him."

"Where's the rope?"

"Rat gnawed it."

"Where's the rat?"

"Cat caught it."

"Where's the cat?"

"Behind the church door. The first who laughs,
or grins, or shows his teeth has three pinches
and three knocks."¹⁹⁸

Whereupon there is a general dispersion, for every child feels sure he will laugh if he remains.

This is very like the game of *Sacks*,¹⁹⁹ recorded in Ireland. The English game *Hewley Pewley*²⁰⁰ also has a similar series—kite—wood—fire—water—ox—butcher—rope—rat—cat. . . .

The game called *The Hare*, played between nurses and children in Macedonia, is curiously parallel to the English game of *Dump*. The dialogue runs:

"Hast thou been shooting?"

"I have."

"Hast thou killed a hare?"

"I have."

"Hast thou cooked it?"

"I have."

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" Hast thou eaten ? "

" I have."

" Hast thou kept a portion for me ? "

" I have."

" Where is it ? "

" In the cupboard."

Here the child holds its fists clenched one over the other ; the nurse tries to open them.

" Crick, crack, the key's broken. . . .

" Where is the hare ? "

" The cat has eaten it."

" Where is the cat ? "

" On the red tiles."

" Where are the red tiles ? "

" In the red earth."

" Where is the red earth ? "

" In the river."

" Where is the river ? "

" The cow has swallowed it up."

" Where is the cow ? "

" The butcher has slaughtered her."

" Where is the butcher ? "

" He is dead. . . .

Leeks, beards, and moustaches ! "

Whereupon the nurse tickles the child under the chin and makes it laugh.²⁰¹

The French game called *Montez l'Echelette*²⁰² also begins with the fist. The little one who is being amused makes his finger climb up the fingers of the closed fist, and asks at each one if the little mouse has passed by. Each time the answer is " Climb

the little ladder," until the child's finger has reached the top of the fist. Then : " Has the little mouse passed by ? " " Yes." " Where is she ? " " In the straw-stack." " Where is the straw-stack ? " " The fire has burnt it." " Where is the fire ? " " The water has quenched it." " Where is the water ? " " Maurice's cows have drunk it." " Where is Maurice ? " " He must be beaten for striking his wife." Whereupon the hands are clapped, and the game ends.

The cumulative form of these *chants de grénouille*, as the Bretons call them, is in itself, apart from the content of the stories, a very curious circumstance. It seems to have been an early discovery, if we may judge by its wide diffusion throughout the world. Probably it struck prehistoric man as a literary device of a very effective kind. In its simplest form it is a mere enumeration from the general to the particular, and one of the earliest examples of this to find a place in literature is certainly a strange saying attributed to our Lord by Papias :²⁰³ " The days will come in which vines shall spring up, each having ten thousand stems, and on each stem ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall give five and twenty measures of wine. And when any saint shall have seized one cluster, another shall cry : I am a better cluster : take me : through me bless the Lord."

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This is singularly parallel to many children's rhymes in various countries to-day. For example, a rhyme is recorded in Georgia which begins :

There was a tree stood in the ground,
The prettiest tree you ever did see ;
The tree in the wood, and the wood in the ground ;
And the green grass growing all round, round, round,
And the green grass growing all round.

Then it proceeds from the tree to the branch, the branch to the bough, the bough to the twig, and so on, until it reaches its climax with :

The prettiest down you ever did see,
The down on the feather, and the feather on the wing,
The wing on the bird, and the bird in the egg,
The egg in the nest, and the nest on the twig.
The nest on the twig, and the twig on the bough,
The twig on the bough, and the bough on the branch,
The bough on the branch, and the branch on the tree,
The branch on the tree, and the tree in the wood,
The tree in the wood, and the wood in the ground,
And the green grass growing all round, round, round,
And the green grass growing all round.²⁰⁴

This is exactly matched by the French rhyme :

Il y a-t-une plume,
C'est la plus belle plume
De toute les plumes.

(There is a feather,
The most beautiful feather
Of all feathers !

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The feather is on the bird,
The bird is in the egg,
The egg in the nest,
The nest among the leaves,
The leaves on the branch,
The branch on the tree,
The tree in the wood,
Ah ! le joli bois,
Madame,
*Ah ! le joli bois !)*²⁰⁵

There is a German rhyme, again, which is almost exactly parallel, but it carries the series a little further, and ends upon a note of genuine domesticity:

What then becomes of the feathers ?
Of the feathers we make a bed.
Bed from the feathers,
Feathers from the bird,
Bird from the egg,
Egg from the nest,
Nest in the hole,
Hole in the branch,
Branch on the tree,
Tree on the hill,
Hill in the field.

It may be observed that a somewhat similar feature is found, all over Europe, in folk tales relating how the life of a giant or an ogre depends upon something external to himself, which he has generally taken extreme care to guard from harm.²⁰⁶ The life of Meleager dependent upon the preservation

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of the charred brand snatched from the hearth when he was born is the classical example of this sort of story. Most of the examples, however, are rude and grotesque in the last degree, and nearly all of them introduce a series parallel to our cumulative tales. Thus, the Russian story of the warlock called *Koschchei the Deathless* tells that when he was asked where his death was, he said : " In such and such a place there stands an oak, and under the oak is a casket, and in the casket is a hare, and in the hare is a duck, and in the duck is an egg, and in the egg is my death." A prince obtained the egg, and when he squeezed it Koschchei bent double, but when he shivered it in pieces the warlock died.²⁰⁷

So in the Norse tale of *The Giant who had no Heart in His Body*, the giant tells the princess : " Far, far away in a lake lies an island, on that island stands a church, in that church is a well, in that well swims a duck, in that duck there is an egg, and in that egg there lies my heart." The hero obtains the egg and breaks it, whereupon the giant bursts.²⁰⁸

Similar tales are told literally from one end of Europe to the other.

It is an advance upon this mere progression from one thing to another when action or comparison takes the place of bare enumeration. Sometimes it is a series of gifts, as in a counting-out rhyme current in northern Germany. It may be rendered :

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Once I went to England
And met an elephant.
The elephant gave me grass,
I gave the grass to the cow.
The cow gave me milk,
I gave the milk to mother.
Mother gave me three farthings,
I gave the three farthings to the baker.
The baker gave me a loaf,
I gave the loaf to the butcher.
The butcher gave me a sausage,
I gave the sausage to the dog.
The dog gave me his paw.
I gave the paw to the maid,
The maid gave me a slap.
 Snip, snap, snout,
 You are out !²⁰⁹

A series of gifts is also the device in the French story *Marotte*, which begins with the request : " Marotte, pick up my ball ! " Marotte refuses until she has been given some bread. The mother refuses to give the bread until she has been given the key, and so on. Finally : " I went to the sea, ' Sea, give me some wind ! ' Then the sea gave me some wind, and I gave the wind to the cloud ; and the cloud gave me some water, and I gave the water to the mower ; and the mower gave me some hay, and I gave the hay to the cow ; and the cow gave me some milk, and I gave the milk to the calf ; and the calf gave me some skin, and I gave the skin to the glover ; and the glover gave me some gloves, and I gave the gloves to my father ; and my father gave me the key, and I gave the key to

my mother ; and my mother gave me some bread, and I gave the bread to Marotte ; and Marotte picked up my ball ! ”²¹⁰ A series of gifts is the device also in the story of *The Death of the Little Hen*.²¹¹ The little hen gobbled up a large nut and began to choke. She begged the cock to run to the well for some water. The well sent him to the bride for some red silk ; the bride to the willow for her little wreath which was hanging there. Then he ran with the wreath to the bride, the silk to the well, the water to the little hen, but she was dead. All the animals came to the funeral, but in crossing a stream they were all drowned, except the cock, who buried the hen, and then died of grief, so “ then every one was dead.”

This is rather like the Corsican tale of *Pedilestu and Mustaccina*. These were two cats, and Mustaccina, who was choking, begged Pedilestu to get her a little bacon to grease her throat. He went to the cupboard for it, but the cupboard was locked. So he went to the locksmith for a key ; the locksmith wanted money for it. So he went to the cheese merchant to ask for some money ; the cheese merchant demanded milk. So he went to the cow ; the cow demanded grass. So he went to the field ; the field demanded rain. So he asked God for rain ; and the good God had pity on the poor cat, and sent the rain to the field, and Pedilestu got the grass and gave it to the cow, got the milk and gave it to the cheese merchant, got the money and gave it to the locksmith, got the key and

opened the cupboard, but, alas ! poor Mustaccina was dead.²¹²

This, again, is not unlike the Indian tale of *The Sparrow and the Crow*. These two birds agreed to have dinner together, but when it was ready the sparrow insisted that the crow was dirty and must wash himself first. So the crow went to the pond for water, but the pond sent him to the deer for one of his horns. The deer sent him to the cow for some milk ; the cow demanded some grass. The grass sent him to the blacksmith for a sickle ; the blacksmith asked him to light the fire and blow the bellows. In doing this, the crow fell into the middle of the fire and was burnt to death, " So that was the end of him, and the sparrow ate all the *khichrī*." ²¹³

A Greek variant begins with an old woman who found a bit of bread on a dunghill. She went to the soup-maker, and said : " O soup-maker, give me some soup, that I may moisten my bread, that I may refresh my heart ! " The soup-maker demanded a bowl, so she went to the potter ; the potter demanded some earth, the earth some dew, the heavens some frankincense, the merchant a kiss, and the maiden (for the merchant evidently did not want the kiss from the old woman !) a pair of shoes, the shoemaker some leather, and the cow some grass. Then the series does not recoil, as it usually does, for the cow ate the grass, the butcher killed the cow, and death killed the butcher.²¹⁴

A French variant begins " Madame wants some

milk. I went to find the cow ; the cow said to me : ' I will give thee some milk ; give me some hay.' I went to find the meadow ; the meadow said to me : ' I will give thee some hay ; give me a scythe.' " Then it proceeds (repeating the questions in the same form) to the blacksmith, who wants some bacon ; to the pig, who wants some acorns ; to the oak-tree, who wants some wind. " Then the sea gave me some wind and I gave it to the oak ; the oak gave me some acorns and I gave them to the pig ; the pig gave me some bacon and I gave it to the blacksmith ; the blacksmith gave me a scythe and I mowed the meadow ; the meadow gave me some hay and I gave the hay to the cow ; the cow gave me some milk and I gave the milk to Madame ! " A humorous touch is added to this tale by the use of farcical verbs manufactured out of nouns—" The oak *acorned* me (m'englande) and I *acorned* the pig ; the meadow *hayed* me (m'enfoine) and I *hayed* the cow," and so forth.²¹⁵

A series of excuses makes the connexion in a quaint story which is current among the peasantry of Palestine. Karakash, it may be explained, figures in many stories as a judge whose pride in his own impartiality leads him to the most absurd decisions. He is supposed to be the Emir Beha-ed-din Karakash, who lived in the twelfth century, and was a lieutenant of Saladin. He was in command of the garrison at Acre when that town was taken by Richard Cœur de Lion about 1192. The judicial eccentricities which are attributed to

him may have originated, it is thought, in lampoons circulated by his enemies. The story tells that a carpenter was working upon a house. A stone fell, breaking his leg. He complained to Karakash, the impartial judge, who called the owner of the house, and charged him with carelessness. "It is not my fault," said the householder, "but the builder's." So the builder was sent for. He said that when he was handling that particular stone a girl passed by in a red dress, which so dazzled him that he could not see what he was doing. The girl was brought. She blamed the mercer, because it was the only cloth he had when she went to buy. The mercer was brought. He blamed the English manufacturer, because this red cloth had been sent to him though he had ordered another sort. "What, you dog!" said Karakash, "do you deal with the heathen?" and ordered the mercer to be hanged from the lintel of his own door. This was about to be done, but the door was low and the mercer was tall, so the executioners returned to Karakash, who asked, "Is the dog dead?" They replied, "He is tall, and the door of his house is low. He cannot hang there." "Then hang the first short man you can find," said Karakash.²¹⁶

Sometimes it is a series of comparisons, as in the child's riddle in French, which runs :

What is stronger than iron ?

Fire.

What is stronger than fire ?

Water.

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What is stronger than water ?

The sun.

What is stronger than the sun ?

The clouds.

What is stronger than the clouds ?

The mountain.

What is stronger than the mountain ?

Man.

What is stronger than man ?

Woman !²¹⁷

This is not unlike a fable in the Koran. When God made the earth, it shook to and fro, until He put the mountains to hold it firm. The angels asked, " O God, is there anything in the creation stronger than the mountains ? " And God said, " Yes, iron, for it will break through them." The angels asked, " O God, is there anything in the creation stronger than iron ? " And God said, " Yes, fire, for it will melt it." The angels asked, " O God, is there anything in the creation stronger than fire ? " And God said, " Yes, water, for it will quench it." The angels asked, " O God, is there anything in the creation stronger than water ? " And God said, " Yes, wind, for it will drive it about." The angels asked, " O God, is there anything in the creation stronger than wind ? " And God said, " Yes, a good man who does works of charity ; if he gives with his right hand, and lets not his left hand know, he rises above all things."²¹⁸ This, again, is practically identical with a passage in the Talmud, which runs as follows :

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"Iron breaks stone ; fire melts iron ; water extinguishes fire ; the clouds consume water ; the storm dispels clouds ; man withstands the storm ; fear conquers man ; wine banishes fear ; sleep overcomes wine, and death is the master of sleep, but 'charity,' says Solomon, 'saves even from death.'"²¹⁹

This once more is closely parallel to another Talmudic legend, found in the *Bereshith Rabba*.²²⁰ It relates that Abraham destroyed his father's idols, and Terah sent him to Nimrod to be judged. Nimrod said, "Thou wilt not worship the gods of thy father. Then pray to fire." Abraham answered, "Why may I not pray to water, which will quench fire?" Nimrod said, "Be it so ; pray to water." "But why not to the clouds which give the water?" said Abraham. "Then pray to the clouds," said Nimrod. "But," said the persistent patriarch, "why not pray to the wind which drives the clouds before it?" "Then pray to the wind," answered the complaisant king. "But why not pray to man who can stand against the wind and build walls which shut it out?" said Abraham. "Be not angry, O King, I cannot pray to the fire or the water or the clouds or the wind, or man, but I will pray to the Creator Who made all these. I will worship Him alone."

There is a short and simple example of this kind of accumulating sequence in the English folk tale of *The Cauld Lad of Hylton*. Hylton Castle, on the banks of the Wear, a few miles above Sunderland,

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was haunted by a brownie, who always complained of being cold, and said :

Wae's me, wae's me !
The acorn's not fallen from the tree,
That's to grow the wood,
That's to make the cradle,
That's to rock the bairn,
That's to lay me !²²¹

It needs only a slight development upon this to construct a story in which each thing mentioned shall act in its own proper fashion, and be at once the result of what goes before and the cause of what comes after. Thus the sequence becomes active and causative, as in the case of those classical examples, *The House that Jack Built*, and *The Old Woman and Her Pig*, and in those interesting prototypes, *Had Gadya*, and the *Lambertuslied* at Münster.

It looks as if the final form of this widespread cycle of stories has grown out of an attempt to express what must have forced itself upon the mind of man as soon as he emerged from the rudest barbarism—the conception of causation. A Bechuana chief said to Casalis the African missionary, “ One event is always the son of another, and we must never forget the parentage.”²²² When the savage grasped that thought, what more natural than to illustrate it by a genealogy of events, a series of acts linked to each other, a chain of causes ? It is significant that intelligent children often hit

upon this notion, and are delighted with it. Thus a child, at "the animated hour of the bath," said to his mother, "You know, everything belongs to something else, if you think about it," and then proceeded to improvise; "O, the towel and the bath, and the bath and the soap, and the soap was the fat, and the fat was the pig, and the pig was the bran, and the bran makes sausages, and man eats sausages, and God gets man!"²²³

There is a close connexion between the method of this child and that of Herbert Spencer, when he writes: "If we ask—Whence comes the power of the river-current, bearing sediment down to the sea? the reply is—The gravitation of water throughout the tract which this river drains. If we ask—How comes the water to be dispersed over this tract? the reply is—It fell in the shape of rain. If we ask—How came the rain to be in that position whence it fell? the reply is—The vapour from which it was condensed was drifted by the winds. If we ask—How came this vapour to be at that height? the reply is—It was raised by evaporation. And if we ask—What force thus raised it? the reply is—The sun's heat."²²⁴ An even better example would be the famous passage in which Darwin traced the connexion between cats and clover. The cats kill the field-mice, and the field-mice destroy the combs and nests of the humble-bees, and the humble-bees fertilize the red clover. Thus the excellence of the red clover depends upon the abundance of cats in the neighbourhood.²²⁵ So

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prehistoric man traced out a causal sequence, link by link, in these cumulative stories, and apparently found delight in doing it. If this is indeed the origin of these stories, they are nothing less than the first rude attempts of man towards a philosophy of the universe.

NOTES

1. Karl Pearson, *The Chances of Death*, II, pp. 53, 54.
2. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 67.
3. A. B. Gomme, *The Traditional Games of England*, I, p. 46.
In the West Riding of Yorkshire the formula runs :
" Inkum, jinkum, Jeremy buck, Yamdy horns do Aw
cock up ? "
4. J. Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, p. 57.
5. H. Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo*, p. 85.
6. G. F. Northall, *English Folk Rhymes*, p. 565.
7. Percy's *Reliques*, II, p. 233.
8. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, II, p. 249. W. W. Newell,
Games and Songs of American Children, pp. 149-275.
9. L. F. Salzmänn, *English Industries of the Middle Ages*,
p. 188.
10. Numerous references are given in Halliwell-Phillipps'
Nursery Rhymes of England.
11. W. Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen*, p. 416.
12. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 199.
13. W. Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen*, p. 416.
14. K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, p. 31.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
17. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 21.
18. G. C. Claridge, *Wild Bush Tribes of Tropical Africa*, p. 75.
19. " Folk tales might well be scattered abroad by merchant-
men gossiping over their Khan fires, by Sidonian
mariners chatting in the sounding loggia of an Homeric
house, by the slave dragged from his home and passed
from owner to owner across Africa or Europe, by the
wife, who, according to primitive law, had to be
chosen from an alien clan."—(Andrew Lang, in the
Introduction to Grimm's *Household Tales*, p. xiv.)
20. G. Maspero, *Les Contes populaires de l'Egypte ancienne*,
pp. 3-21.

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21. Ælian, *Varia Historia*, xiii, 33.
22. W. R. S. Ralston, *Russian Folk Tales*, pp. 178-181.
23. Straparola, *Piacevoli Notti* (1550). It is the first story of the eleventh night. Straparola's cat is not booted, and the owner of the castle is absent, but dies on his way home. Basile, *Pentamerone* (1637). This is the version of the tale known in Italy to-day as *Gagliuso*.
24. See Mr. Andrew Lang's Introduction to his edition of Perrault's *Popular Tales*, pp. vii-xxx.
25. P. Vignoli, *Myth and Science*, pp. 75, 76.
26. J. Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, pp. 101, 102.
27. N. B. Dennys, *The Folk-Lore of China*, p. 36.
28. Two passages in the book of Job (iii, 8 and xxvi, 13) probably refer to a dragon in the sky that was believed to devour the sun or the moon in an eclipse.
29. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, pp. 328, 329.
30. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, III, p. 78.
31. S. R. Maitland, *The Dark Ages*, p. 152.
32. Boëthius, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, iv, 5, 7-12.

Palleant plenae cornua lunae
 Infecta metis noctis opacae
 Quaeque fulgenti texerat ore
 Confusa Phoebe detegat astra,
 Commouet gentes publicus error
 Lassantque crebris pulsibus aera.

33. *The Twelve Prophets*, II, p. 524. Many savage tribes adopt a like procedure against earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The Bagobos of the Philippines beat their dogs to make them howl, so as to frighten the serpent who is shaking the post which supports the world. The Tongans shout and beat the ground to make Móooi be still—the god on whose prostrate form the earth rests. The Dorasques of Panama shoot arrows at the volcano of Chirique, to frighten the spirit that inhabits the mountain, when the volcano becomes active.—(J. G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 166.) The ringing of church bells against storms and lightning and the ringing of the passing bell are survivals from the same range of ideas—*defunctos plango, vivos voco, fulmina frango*—but it was the evil spirits who caused the tempest and the thunder, and who waited for the souls of the dead, that were in the popular mind. Naogeorgus writes :

"I sawe my self at Numberg once, a town in Toring
coast,
A bell that with this title bolde himself did proudly
boast:
'By name I Mary called am: with sound I put to
flight
The thunder crackes and hurtful stormes and every
wicked spright.'"

—(Barnabe Googe, *The Popish Kingdome*, 41.)

There was a special endowment at Old St. Paul's for ringing "the hallowed belle in great tempestes and lightenynge."—(H. B. Walters, *Church Bells of England*, p. 262.) There is a mass of evidence with regard to the use of bells in relation to lightning, storms, and death in Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, II, pp. 128-140, and Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, III, pp. 450-480.

34. P. Vignoli, *Myth and Science*, p. 10.
35. E. B. Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 346; and *Anthropology*, p. 394.
36. A. Lang, *Modern Mythology*, p. 135.
37. Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood*, p. 31.
38. Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, II, p. 160. W. Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen*, p. 85.
39. Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, II, p. 35. W. Mannhardt, *Germanische Mythen*, p. 197.
40. R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 162. L. Frobenius, *The Childhood of Man*, p. 326.
41. Isaac Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 223.
42. Mallet, *Northern Antiquities*, II, p. 34.
43. S. Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, p. 201.
44. L. Frobenius, *The Childhood of Man*, p. 347.
45. See, however, W. R. S. Ralston, *Russian Folk Tales*, p. 291, where, in the tale of *The Fox Physician*, there is a magic cabbage-stalk that reaches into the sky.
46. L. Frobenius, *The Childhood of Man*, p. 382. Sir George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, p. 2. Compare the myth of Māui and his father, Ru, the sky-supporter, in W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*, pp. 58, 59.
47. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 291.
48. E. B. Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, pp. 350-358.
49. J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, II, pp. 52, 53.
50. Karl Pearson, *The Chances of Death*, II, p. 90.
51. Plutarch, *Quaest. Roman.*, Q. 60.

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52. J. A. Macculloch, *The Childhood of Fiction*, p. 316.
53. O. Bates, *The Eastern Libyans*, p. 176.
54. Plutarch, *Quaest. Roman.*, Q. 109-Q. 112.
55. J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 106.
56. It is curious that some of these Pythagorean tabus are found attributed to Aristotle in the *Gesta Romanorum* (Tale xxxiv).
57. Sir James Frazer, in a lecture reproduced in *Folk-Lore*, I, pp. 157-160, suggests another explanation of these last Pythagorean tabus—that the impress of the body or the pot would enable magical harm to be done to that person, or through that utensil. It is colossal impertinence to differ from so great an authority, but I cannot help thinking that the explanation suggested in the text is better, inasmuch as it is still more primitive, so to speak.
58. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, II, p. 372. This recurs perpetually. The dead man has to say, "I know thee, and I know thy name!" to almost everything he encounters in the underworld. See Vol. I, p. 156; Vol. II, pp. 264, 299, 300, 359, 372, 375, 448-473.
59. *Contra Celsum*, V, 45.
60. Herodotus, I, 146. He says that the Milesian colonists had married Carian women whose relatives they had slain, and that this was the reason for the custom. Διὰ τοῦτον δὲ τὸν φόνον αἱ γυναῖκες αὐταὶ νόμον θέμεναι σφίσι αὐτῇσι ὄρκους ἐπῆλασαν καὶ παρέδοσαν τῇσι θυγατράσι, μή κοτε ὁμοσιῆσαι τοῖσι ἀνδράσι μηδὲ οὐνόματι βῶσαι τὸν ἐωντῆς ἄνδρα, τοῦδε εἵνεκα ὅτι ἐφόνευσαν σφέων τοὺς πατέρας καὶ ἄνδρας καὶ παῖδας καὶ ἔπειτα ταῦτα ποιήσαντες αὐτῇσι συνοίκεον.
61. A. J. N. Tremearne, *Hausa Superstitions and Customs*, p. 178. A story which is given later in this book turns entirely upon the importance of not revealing the secret name.
62. A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, p. 109.
63. J. G. Campbell, *Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands*, p. 244.
64. J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, III, p. 172.
65. A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man*, p. 419.
66. W. Gregor, *Folk-Lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 30.
67. Grimm, *Household Tales*, I, p. 221.

68. E. Clodd, *Tom-Tit-Tot*, pp. 9-16. J. Jacobs, *English Fairy Tales*, pp. 1-8.
69. The Scottish version is *Whuppity Stoorie*.—(R. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, pp. 72-77.) The Magyar version is *Dancing Vargalúská*.—(Jones and Kropf, *Folk Tales of the Magyars*, p. 46.)
70. E. S. Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales*, p. 27.
71. A. H. Keane, *Ethnology*, p. 10.
72. J. A. Macculloch, *The Childhood of Fiction*, p. 249.
73. E. Clodd, *Myths and Dreams*, p. 105.
74. In the folk tales of different peoples the part of the iriendly beast has been played by many different animals : it is a fox in Hungary, a dog in Bohemia, a jackal in India, a leopard in Uganda, a wolf among the American Indians, and a heron among the Polynesians.
75. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, v, 5, 84 : " But stay, I smell a man of middle earth." *King Lear*, iii, 4, 187 : " Childe Rowland to the dark tower came. His word was still, Fie, foh, and fum, I smell the blood of a British man." (The change of the traditional *English*-man into *British* man, by the way, is one of the details that dates the play as subsequent to the accession of James I.) In Nash's play, *Have with You to Saffron Walden* (1596), it is " Fy, fa, fum, I smell the bloud of an Englishman ! " It is curious that the formula should persist in a Gaelic tale : " Fiaw, fiaw, foagrich ! " —(Campbell, *Tales of the West Highlands*, I, p. 98.)
76. Perrault's *Popular Tales* (Lang's edition), p. 66.
77. Grimm, *Kinder-und Hausmärchen*, I, p. 152.
78. G. W. Dasent, *Popular Tales from the Norse*, p. 191. (Cf. p. 132.)
79. F. A. Steel, *Tales of the Punjab*, p. 162.
80. J. Macdougall, *Folk Tales and Fairy Lore*, p. 63.
81. Mr. Andrew Lang once pointed out that in the *Eumenides* Æschylus makes the Furies *smell* Orestes' blood :
'Ὅσμη βροτείων αἱμάτων με προσγελᾷ ;
82. I am told that the Pathans on the north-west frontier of India regarded the British aeroplanes as *afrits*, and hid themselves on the approach of one. But if an aeroplane landed near the hiding place of a tribesman, he was doubly terrified, because he thought the *afrit* had come down to *smell him out*.
83. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 107.
84. J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, I, p. 421.

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85. 1 Kings xvi, 34. (Cf. Joshua vi, 26).
86. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 105.
87. The Shans will not begin building a house until the owner offers a sacrifice to the earth-spirit.—(L. Milne, *The Shans at Home*, p. 16.)
88. W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 126, 127.
89. A. C. Haddon, *The Study of Man*, pp. 352, 353.
90. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 104.
91. W. Harrison, *Description of Britaine*, p. 245.
92. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 104. A correspondent of mine in India writes: "The Uruja servants of Calcutta have been panic-stricken several times whilst I have been here because the rumour was current all over the city that the bodies of young children, alive, were wanted for sacrifice at the opening of a bridge."
93. Or a puppet. Yearly, on the ides of May, the Vesta' virgins cast into the Tiber, from the *pons sublicius*, twenty-four straw puppets, made in the shape of men, bound hand and foot. The puppets were called Argei, and the ceremony was performed in the presence of the magistrates, the pontifices, and the Flaminica Dialis, who was in mourning garb. The whole rite is obscure, and Wissowa's theory that the puppets represented Greeks, who were actually drowned in earlier times, cannot be regarded as proved, but there can hardly be a doubt that the practice does refer to human sacrifice in connexion with the construction or the maintenance of the bridge.—(See W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals*, pp. 111–120; and *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, pp. 55, 65, 321, 322.)
94. K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, p. 225.
95. W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, pp. 204–210.
96. C. G. Rawling, *The Land of the New Guinea Pygmies*, p. 273.
97. Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, V, 1281.
98. Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race*, p. 278.
99. Exodus iv, 25; Joshua v, 3 (R.V.).
100. Herodotus, II, 86. μετὰ δὲ λίθῳ Αἰθιοπικοῦ ὀξεῖ παροσχίσαντες παρὰ τὴν λαπάρην ἐξ ὧν εἶλον τὴν κοιλίην πᾶσαν.
101. Livy, I, 24. On the conclusion of a treaty between the Romans and the Albans, the herald said: "If they shall have withdrawn first by public counsel or evil

treachery, then do thou, great Jupiter, so strike the Roman people as I shall here strike this swine this day, and strike them so much the more as thou hast more power and might! When he had so said, he smote the hog with a flint stone." (*Id ubi dixit, porcum saxo silice percussit.*)

102. J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (*Balder the Beautiful*), I, p. 8.
103. E. Clodd, *Tom-Tit-Tot*, p. 34.
104. J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (*Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*), p. 13.
105. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, I, p. 287.
106. *Ibid.*, II, p. 285. Gomme, *Ethnology in Folk-Lore*, pp. 54, 55.
107. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 140. Lane, *Modern Egyptians*, p. 204.
108. H. Parker, *Village Folk Tales of Ceylon*, I, p. 137.
109. W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India*, II, p. 11.
110. J. G. Campbell, *Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, p. 36.
111. R. Kirk, *A Secret Commonwealth of Elves* (Reprint of 1815), p. 6.
112. E. S. Hartland, *The Science of Fairy Tales*, p. 97.
113. T. Bent, *The Cyclades*, p. 181. Mr. Bent heard a mother call her baby Σίδηπέ μου = "My Iron."
114. J. G. Campbell, *Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands*, p. 153. "The writer remembers well that, when a schoolboy, great confidence was put in a knife of which he was the envied possessor, and in a nail which another boy had, to protect us from a fairy, which was said to have made its appearance at a spot near which the road to school passed the Hawthorn Bush between the Black Nose and the Pass of the Dead. This was in Appin, Argyllshire."
115. Dean Ramsay, *Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character*, p. 42.
116. Karl Pearson, *The Chances of Death*, II, p. 35.
117. W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, p. 158. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, II, p. 265.
118. K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, p. 237.
119. Rivers, *The Todas*, pp. 559, 560.
120. E. Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, p. 200.
121. C. I. Elton, *Origins of English History*, pp. 185, 186.
"If any tenant in gavelkind die, having inherited

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gavelkind lands and tenements, let all his sons divide that heritage equally. And, if there be no male heir, let the partition be made among the females in the same way as among brothers. And let the messuage also be divided among them, but the hearth-place shall belong to the youngest son or daughter (the others receiving an equivalent in money), and as far as 40 feet round the hearth-place, if the size of the heritage will allow it" (*mes le astre demorra al puné ou al punée, e la value seite de ceo livré a chescun des parceners de cel héritage a xl pes de cel astre, si le tenement le peut suffrir*).

122. *Transactions of the Ethnological Society* (New Series), II, p. 84.
123. J. Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, p. 531.
124. J. Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, pp. 439, 440.
125. A. H. Keane, *Ethnology*, p. 257.
126. C. G. Rawling, *The Land of the New Guinea Pygmies*, p. 255.
127. E. B. Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*, p. 104.
128. F. W. Farrar, *Chapters on Language*, p. 199.
129. E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, pp. 310, 311.
130. Humboldt, *Personal Researches*, II, p. 117.
131. עֲשֵׂתוֹת עֲשֵׂתִי.
132. In Joseph's dream (Genesis xxxvii, 9).
133. Exodus xxxiv, 6, 7.
134. *Notes and Queries* Fourth Series, XI (1868), p. 557.
This particular version was contributed by the Rev. Dr. Husenbeth, who stated that he had "learned it many years ago from an aged Dominican friar." Probably the earliest printed versions of this chant of the Creed belong to the second half of the sixteenth century. It was set to music in a motet for thirteen voices by Theodor Clinius, who died in 1602.—(L. Eckenstein, *Comparative Studies in Nursery Rhymes*, p. 145.)
135. G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folk-Lore*, pp. 329-331.
136. K. Simrock, *Die deutschen Volkslieder*, p. 520.
137. R. H. Busk, *The Folk-Lore of Rome*, pp. 254, 255.
138. R. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 44.
139. *Notes and Queries*, Fourth Series, II, pp. 452-599; III, p. 90; X, p. 500.
140. This song has recently been discovered among the inhabitants of the Southern Appalachians in the United States. They seem to be descendants of

eighteenth-century emigrants from this country. In this version twelve represents the Twelve Apostles ; six the cheerful waiters (!) ; four the Gospel preachers ; and " One, O One is God alone, and He shall ever remain so."—(Olive D. Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, pp. 300, 301.)

141. *Longman's Magazine*, XIV, pp. 187–193. Dr. Augustus Jessop, who recorded this example, attempted to connect it with the Antiphons of the Magnificat, known as the " Great O's of Advent." It is a most extraordinary suggestion. There is no point of relation or resemblance whatever, except that the Antiphons all begin with " O "—" O Sapientia," " O Radix Jesse," " O Clavis David," and so on—and that some lines of this song end with " O "—" Twelve's the twelve Apostles O ! " " And when the one is left alone, No more it can be seen O ! " There is positively no other shred of connexion at all.
142. J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, II, pp. 556–563.
143. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 252. Bolton, *The Counting-Out Rhymes of Children*, p. 68.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
145. Some such rhyme was evidently familiar in Scotland in the eighteenth century, for Scott makes the old butler quote it in *The Bride of Lammermoor* : " But all this while, Caleb, you have never told me what became of the arms and powder," said Ravenswood. " Why, as for the arms," said Caleb, " it was just like the bairns' rhyme :

' Some gaed east, and some gaed west,
And some gaed to the craw's nest.' "

146. W. Gregor, *Folk-Lore of the North-East of Scotland*, pp. 169, 170.
147. See A. J. Ellis, *The Anglo-Cymric Score* (in the *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1877, 1878, 1879).
148. For various versions of the " shepherds' score," and rhymes connected with it, see *Notes and Queries*, Fourth Series, VIII, p. 540 ; Sixth Series, XI, pp. 206, 336, 472 ; Eighth Series, IV, p. 45 ; Seventh Series, IV, pp. 166, 286, 370.
149. Gutch and Peacock, *Lincolnshire Folk-Lore*, p. 303.

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150. B. C. A. Windle, *Life in Early Britain*, p. 209. E. M. Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, p. 327.
151. Isaac Taylor, *The Origin of the Aryans*, pp. 67-76. A. Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers, *The Evolution of Culture*, p. 161.
152. B. C. A. Windle, *Remains of the Prehistoric Age in England*, p. 310.
153. J. Rhŷs, *Celtic Britain*, pp. 259, 260. I will add a couple of striking examples of the tenacity of the popular memory. Bullock, the traveller, was permitted to disinter a Mexican idol which was known to be buried under the gallery of the university in the city of Mexico, in order to make a cast of it. It was a hideous monster, hewn out of a block of basalt, in the shape of a deformed human figure with serpents for arms, the paws of a tiger, the wings of a vulture, and a necklace of human hearts, hands, and heads. Thousands of men had been sacrificed to it in the olden days. "During the time it was exposed the court of the university was crowded with people; most of whom expressed the most decided anger and contempt. Not so however all the Indians—I attentively marked their countenances; not a smile escaped them, or even a word—all was silence and attention. . . . I was informed that chaplets of flowers had been placed on the figure by natives who had stolen thither, unseen, in the evening, for that purpose."—(Bullock, *Six Months' Residence and Travels in Mexico*, pp. 341, 342.) And yet the Spaniard had exterminated the old Mexican religion with fire and sword three centuries before.

Heine had read Bullock's book in a German translation, and he quotes this remarkable incident in the *Reisebilder*.

And here is another striking instance of traditional memory, recorded by a distinguished philosopher: "In a Danish village church the custom of bowing when passing a certain spot in the church wall was maintained into the nineteenth century, but no one knew the reason of this, until, on the whitewash being scraped away, a picture of the Madonna was found on the wall: thus the custom had outlived the Catholicism which prompted it by three hundred years."—(Höfding, *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 148.)

154. Maurice, *Tyler, Ball, and Oldcastle*, p. 145.
155. C. Oman, *The Great Revolt of 1381*, p. 87.

156. E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, pp. 398, 399. M. A. Murray, *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, pp. 277-279. Gilles de Retz seems to have been an eminent wizard.
157. W. Besant, *London*, p. 118.
158. Schelling, *The English Chronicle Play*, p. 221.
159. Cf. R. Chambers, *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 121.
160. *Notes and Queries*, Second Series, IV, p. 156. Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, p. 451.
161. *Notes and Queries*, Tenth Series, VI, p. 171.
162. A. Gasquet, *Henry the Eighth and the English Monasteries*, II, p. 329.
163. Tighe and Davis, *Annals of Windsor*, p. 562.
164. W. A. J. Archbold, *The Somerset Religious Houses*, p. 152.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 214.
166. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
167. *Victoria County History of Somerset*, II, p. 96.
168. *Ibid.*, II, p. 380.
169. G. F. Northall, *English Folk Rhymes*, p. 67. Another version is :

"Hopton, Horner, Smyth, Knocknaile, and Thynne,
When Abbots went out, they came in."

—(Aubrey's *Lives*, II, p. 362.)

170. *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, p. 58.
171. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 92.
172. R. C. Trench, *Gustavus Adolphus in Germany*, p. 106. K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, p. 26.
173. *Ibid.*
174. *Ibid.*
175. H. C. Bolton, *The Counting-Out Rhymes of Children*, p. 80.
176. K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, p. 211.
177. J. A. Macculloch, *The Childhood of Fiction*, p. 133.
178. It is current as a children's rhyme in Rome in the form :

"Marbrù' se ne va in guera,
Miron tò, miron tò, miron tera
Quando ritornerà ? Quando ritornerà ?
Miron tò, miron tò, chi lo sa ? "

—(G. Zanazzo, *Canti Popolari Romani*, p. 243.

179. In the Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco's delightful book on *The Study of Folk Songs* there is the statement that "French children still have songs about 'le Prince Noir'" (p. 255). I was not able to discover

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any French rhyme which contained this very interesting reference, and applied to the Countess, who very kindly replied to the following effect: "My sister heard the children singing the song when she was in a French convent. She did not remember more than the first line"—the line which I have quoted in the text.

180. In a Basque story the ogre is called a "Tartaro"—(W. Webster, *Basque Legend*, p. 4.)
181. There is a German translation of it in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, p. 798.
182. English readers will recall an extraordinarily effective use of it by Mr. Zangwill in *Dreamers of the Ghetto*.
183. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 86.
184. G. A. Kohut, *Le Had Gadya et les Chansons Similaires*, in *Revue des Etudes Juivès*, XXXI, pp. 240-246. Les chansons populaires qui se trouvent à la fin de la Haggada de Pâque ne paraissent pas avoir été connues des Sefardim, car elles ne sont mentionnées par aucun rabbin du moyen âge. Cependant aujourd'hui en Orient, les Sefardim chantent ce morceau avec sa traduction espagnole. Dans les pays slaves et allemands, elles sont chantées encore aujourd'hui dans la langue nationale.
185. "Y asi como seule decirse el gaot al rato, el rato à la cuerda, la cuerda al palo, daba el arriero à Sancho, Sancho à la moza, la moza à él, el ventiro à la moza" (I, c, xvi).
186. Nork, *Der Festkalender*, p. 587.
187. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, I, p. 287.
188. K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, p. 282.
189. E. Steere, *Swahili Tales*, pp. 287, 288.
190. E. Cosquin, *Contes populaires de Lorraine*, pp. 32-41.
191. The Scotch tale of *The Wife and Her Bush of Berries* (Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, pp. 57-59) has an almost exactly parallel series: staff—fire—water—ox—axe—blacksmith—rope—mouse—cat.

It is some such story to which Peter Peebles refers in *Redgauntlet*: "'And you, who are acquainted with the forms,' resumed my father, 'know that the client states the cause to the agent—the agent to the counsel.'—'The counsel to the Lord Ordinary,' continued Peter, once set a-going, like the peal of an alarm-clock 'the Ordinary to the Inner House, the President to the Bench. It is just like the rope to the man, the

man to the ox, the ox to the water, the water to the fire.'—'Hush, for Heaven's sake, Mr. Peebles,' said my father."

192. F. A. Steel, *Tales of the Punjab*, pp. 198–202.
193. D. H. Sanders, *Das Volks-leben der Neugriechen*, p. 59.
194. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 124.
195. K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, p. 303.
196. I have wondered if there can be any connexion between these stories (especially the central series: water—ox—knife—butcher) and the Athenian ritual known as "the murder of the ox" (*βουφόνια*), where the maidens who had carried water (with which the weapons were wetted) accused the men who had sharpened the axe and knife, and these men in turn blamed those who had handed the implements to the butchers, and they again blamed the butchers, and they blamed the axe and knife, which were finally adjudged guilty and cast into the sea.—(See J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough (Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild)*, II, pp. 4–5.) There is a curious parallel to this, as far as the notion of excuse is concerned, among the Vogulitzis of Siberia, who, when they have killed a bear, address it by way of apology, to say "that the blame is to be laid on the arrows and iron, which were made and forged by the Russians!"—(Clodd, *Myths and Dreams*, p. 101.)
 The Roman *regifugium*, where the officer called the *rex sacrorum* performed a sacrifice for the good of the city, and then ran away as fast as he could, is probably a fragment of a rite similar to the Athenian *βουφόνια*. See W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals*, pp. 327–330. Compare the obscure Roman rite called *poplifugia*, *ibid.*, pp. 174–176.
197. *Folk-Lore Journal*, VII, pp. 219, 220. Compare A. B. Gomme, *Traditional Games*, I, p. 391.
198. W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, p. 134. A. B. Gomme, *Traditional Games*, I, p. 118.
199. *Ibid.*, II, p. 146.
200. *Ibid.*, I, p. 207.
201. G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folk-Lore*, pp. 324, 325.
202. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 45.
203. Irenæus, *Contra Hæreses*, V, 33, 3.
204. W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, p. 111.

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205. W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*, p. 113. Compare E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 171, where the series is—garden—tree—branch—nest—bird.
206. J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (1900), III, pp. 368–380. *The Golden Bough* (Balder the Beautiful), I, pp. 94–152.
207. W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 165. Compare a remarkable parallel in J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, I, pp. 7–11.
208. G. W. Dasent, *Popular Tales from the Norse*, p. 135.
209. H. C. Bolton, *Counting-Out Rhymes of Children*, p. 88.
210. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, pp. 122–124. A German variant has the long and rather novel series: thicket—wood—fire—ashes—meadow—grass—cow—dung—field—corn—miller—meal—baker—bran—sow—sausages—shoemaker. The Mouse is the hero of the tale, and he has to go to all the trouble indicated in the series to induce the shoemaker to mend his *Pänzchen*, which he broke with laughing excessively when the cat fell into the water.—(K. Simrock, *Das deutsche Kinderbuch*, pp. 274–276.)
211. Grimm, *Household Tales*, I, p. 311.
212. J. B. F. Ortoli, *Les Contes populaires de l'Ile de Corse*, pp. 237–240.
213. F. A. Steel, *Tales of the Punjab*, pp. 102–106.
214. G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folk-Lore*, pp. 327, 328.
215. J. F. Bladé, *Contes populaires recueillis en l'Agenais*, p. 25. Compare the example in Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, pp. 118–120, where the series is: sea—oak—pig—meadow—cow—calf—wolf—mother—father, and where the verbs have a like character.
216. Hanauer, *Folk-Lore of the Holy Land*, pp. 121, 122.
217. E. Rolland, *Rimes et Jeux de l'Enfance*, p. 213.
218. Quoted in E. Cosquin, *Contes populaires de Lorraine*, p. 32. There is a fable like this in the *Panchatantra*, where the sun sends a Brahman to the cloud, which is stronger than the sun, and the cloud sends him to the wind, and the wind to the mountain, and the mountain to the rat.—(Benfey, *Panchatantra*, II, p. 264.)
219. H. Polano, *The Talmud*, p. 291.
220. J. W. Etheredge, *The Targums on the Pentateuch*, I, p. 191.
221. E. S. Hartland, *English Folk and Fairy Tales*, p. 143. Northall, *English Folk Rhymes*, p. 160.

- 222. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, p. 4. Casalis, *Les Bassoutos*, p. 248.
- 223. Lady Glenconner, *The Sayings of the Children*, p. 97.
- 224. *First Principles*, p. 189.
- 225. *The Origin of Species*, p. 70.

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